MEIKO KAJI JAPAN'S '70s POP SENSATION • NICK DRAKE TRUTHS AND LIES

SHINDIG!

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

YUSUF / CAT STEVENS

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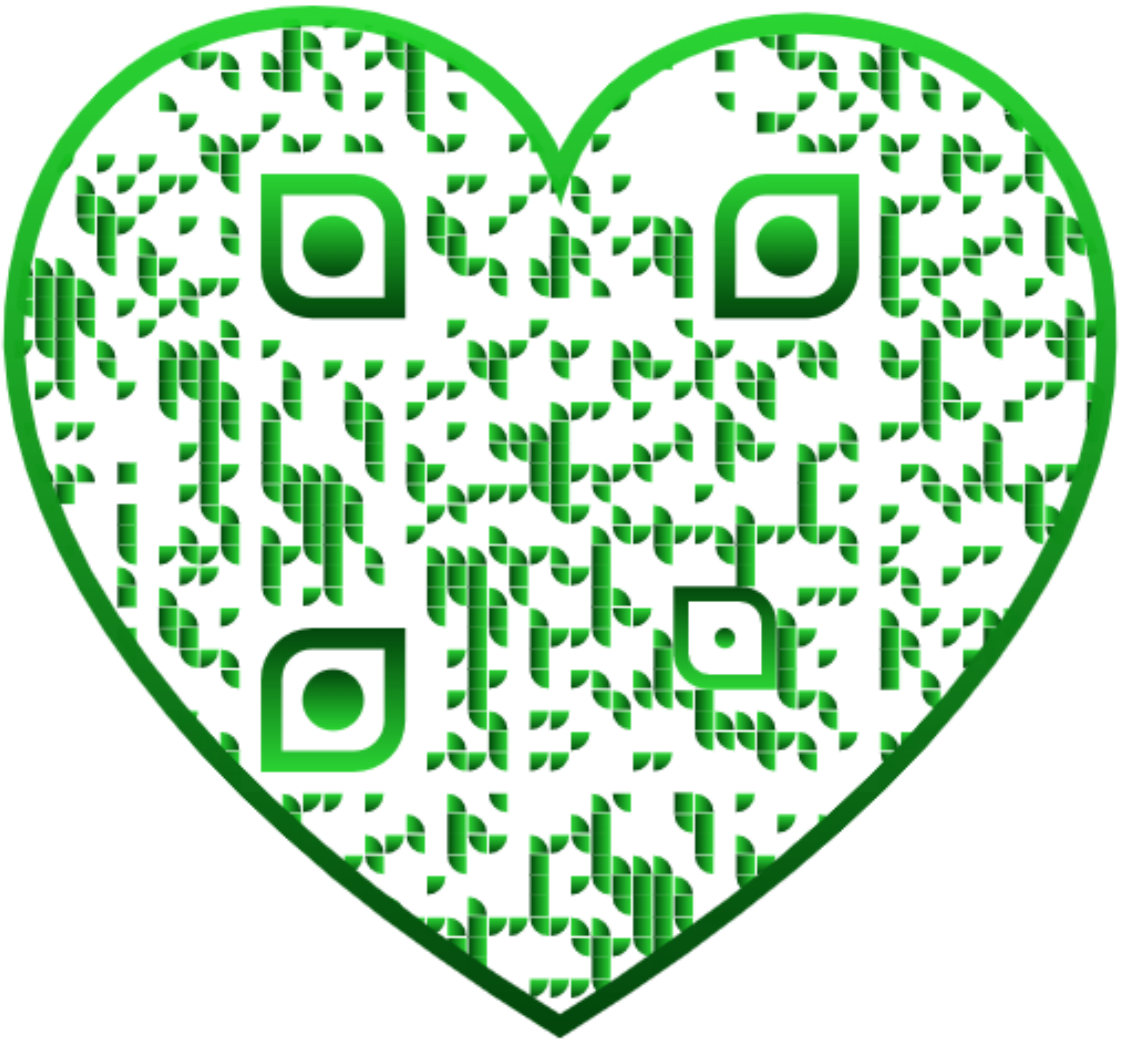

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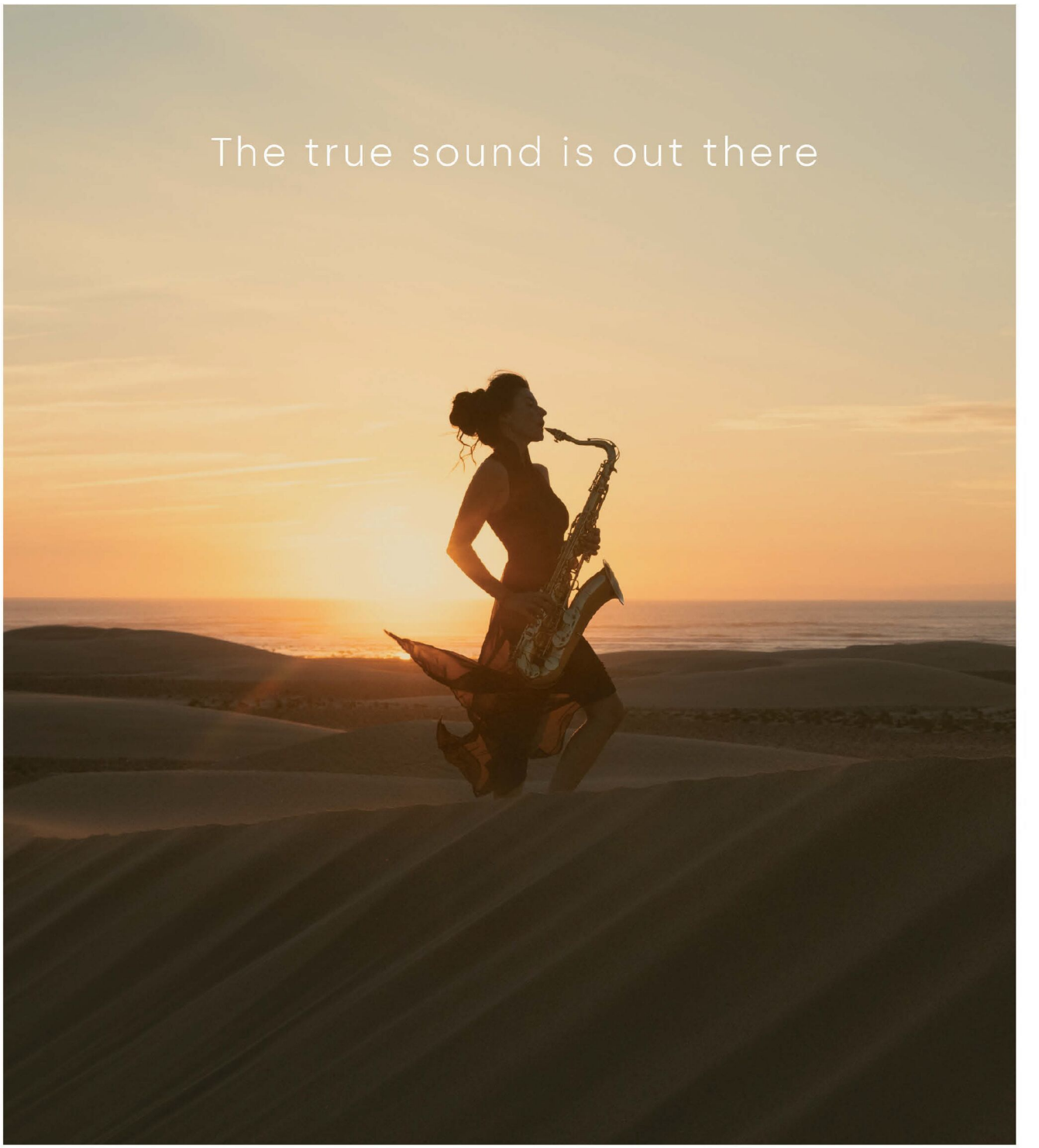

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contents

ISSUE 141, JULY 2023

Features

Nick Drake 38
Biographer Richard Morton Jack dispels the rumours

Alex Harvey 42
Before he was "sensational". The working musician's '60s adventures

The Wicker Man 54
We celebrate the totemic folk-horror musical's 50th birthday

Yusuf / Cat Stevens 60
Exclusive interview! From Tin Pan Alley to pop stardom and the dawn of a new era. Plus, his brand-new album!

Regulars

Thoughts & Words 6
Your letters, tweets and emails

Shindiggin' 8
What's hot on the *Shindig!* turntable

Subscribers' Prize Draw 9
Subscribe now and you could win TSPTR *Wicker Man* clobber

It's A Happening Thing 10
Mapache, Iraina Mancini, Mohama Saz, Mystic Chords Of Memory, Sam Burton, Co-Pilot, Night Beats, Richard Hawley, *The Gallows Pole*, Me And My Kites

Family Album 24
Synanthesia's beguiling acid-folk curio

Songbook 26
The First Edition's 'But You Know I Love You'

Deep Cuts 28
Island Records' UK beat, psych and pop oddities

Neil Young 30
Candid photographs from Henry Diltz's luxurious new CSNY chronicle

20 Questions 32
From thuggery, northern soul and disco dancing championships to immortality as a renowned deejay and producer

Reviews 68
The best in reissues, new releases, books and live shows

Prize Crossword 94
Win the 3-CD deluxe edition of Reg King's 1971 album

Vinyl Art 96
Dalida's 1968 chanson/art-pop hybrid *Les Temps Des Fleurs*

Vinyl Clicks 98
Andy Bown's 1972 solo debut *Gone To My Head*

Meiko Kaji 48
An icon of Japanese exploitation cinema discusses her film work and second career as a now-collectable pop singer

"When I made my debut in 1965, I was a total amateur. I was spotted by a talent scout. I had never studied theatre, or anything else"

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SHINDIG!

welcome

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Hi Gang,

Summer really has sprung early this year. All final proofs and edits for this issue were actioned on my deck chair underneath a bountiful ash tree. And no, I never ever complain about work.

After two months of pretty intense garage and psych coverage ('60s and '80s), this issue is less tightly focused, offering – we hope – something for everyone. We've got an exclusive interview with Yusuf / Cat Stevens, surrounding his early pop career, and Nick Drake biographer Richard Morton Jack validating and expounding upon the many rumours surrounding the tragic singer-songwriter. Alex Harvey's '60s career is given serious attention, and the music, period merchandise and myths of *The Wicker Man* are explored. Japanese starlet Meiko Kaji gives a very rare interview about her '60s and '70s music and film careers, there's a Deep Cuts on pink Island oddities, Henry Diltz's candid shots of Neil Young, West Coast acolytes Mapache, and our 20 Questions spotlights the one and only Keb Darge. This is just a small sample of the many splendid delights within.

Please don't forget to subscribe if you're yet to do so. It's the only guaranteed way of never missing an issue, getting the mag before it hits the stands, pus the all-important automatic entrance into the monthly subscribers' prize draw, and instant access to our full digital archive. As we steadily approach that hallowed 150th edition, we can't help but feel that we've discovered a new lease of life, giving you the selective reader exactly what you need. Do let us know what you'd like to see.

Enjoy the sunshine,

Jon 'Mojo' Mills
Editor-In-Chief

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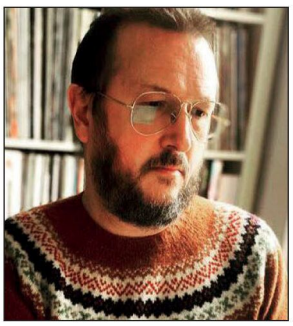

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Our Godley & Creme limited edition vinyl is now in stock. All pre-orders have now been dispatched. We only have a few left now. Head to silverbackpublishing.rocks/product/godley-cremes-lost-60s-recordings-exclusive-vinyl-offer/ to buy now. First come, first served.

New releases: July 2023

Tribal Rites Of The New Saturday Night Brooklyn Disco 1974-5

CDCHD 1618/ XXQLP2 119 (2LP)

In 1975, writer Nik Cohn investigated the burgeoning discotheque scene in Brooklyn and Queens for New York magazine; two years later, his feature would be filmed as Saturday Night Fever. These are the records Cohn heard in those dark dance dens - irresistible R&B and soul, disco before it was disco.

David Vanian And The Phantom Chords Big Beat Presents

HIQLP2 087 2LP

When the Damned (first) split up in 1989, lead singer David Vanian formed the Phantom Chords. A full album was released in 1995 but with vinyl sales in terminal decline the album was a CD-only release. Now, nearly three decades later, the album is finally issued on vinyl as a 2-LP set.

Motörhead Motorhead C/W City Kids

S 13 (12")

This all-time classic of heavy metal was originally released by Chiswick back in June 1977. Although the 7" version in a picture sleeve was later reissued on Big Beat the original Chiswick 12" has not been reissued – until now.

The Best Of The Damned

DAM 1 (LP)

The original hits package containing the first 2 Stiffs, the Captain's mega-rare first solo single and all the best from Chiswick.

Leon Thomas Full Circle

HIQLP 105 (LP)

The final studio album from Thomas' classic period – a glorious combination of soul, funk and jazz.

The Blue Flames The Blue Flames EP

LTDEP 029 (7" EP)

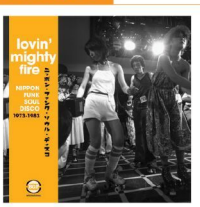
The original sound of Georgie Fame's Blue Flames, on a single EP for the very first time.

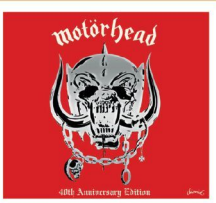
Hopscotch / Andwella Look At The Lights Go Up C/W Hold On To Your Mind

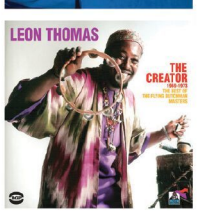
NW 515 (7")

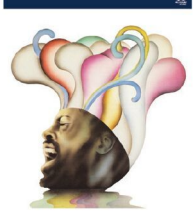
The latest 45 on Bob Stanley's Measured Mile label is another double-sided gem, this time picking up on a pair of terrific turn-of-the-70s acts whose original 7" singles are now both hard to find and horribly expensive.

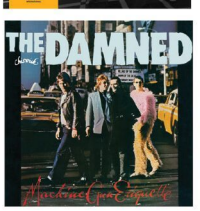
Also available:

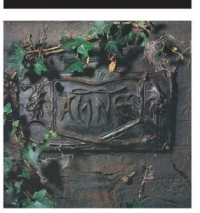


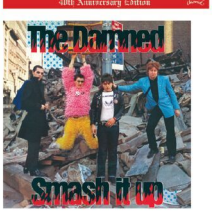












thoughts&words

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STAR LETTER

JUST WHAT I NEED

Hi Jon,

I enjoyed your article on the *Nuggets* album. I bought this back when it came out. I was glad to see all those tracks in one place, as it was hard to get *any* record back then that was no longer on the charts.

I'm really enjoying reading about The Creeps, Playn Jayn and especially Direct Hits and Teardrop Explodes in the new issue too. What I loved about those bands was that they were doing '60s type songs with terrific production. For me, the '80s saw the pinnacle of rock mixing. Afterwards, all the most talented producers, engineers and mixers went into dance related music.

Would love to see some articles on some '80s bands that don't get any recognition today, such as The Comsat Angels, The Sound and Modern Eon. Modern Eon's album has never had a proper reissue. Renaissance Records did one, but all the tracks were mastered from MP3s, so it doesn't count. I know someone else has mentioned these bands in the letters page, so others are interested as well.

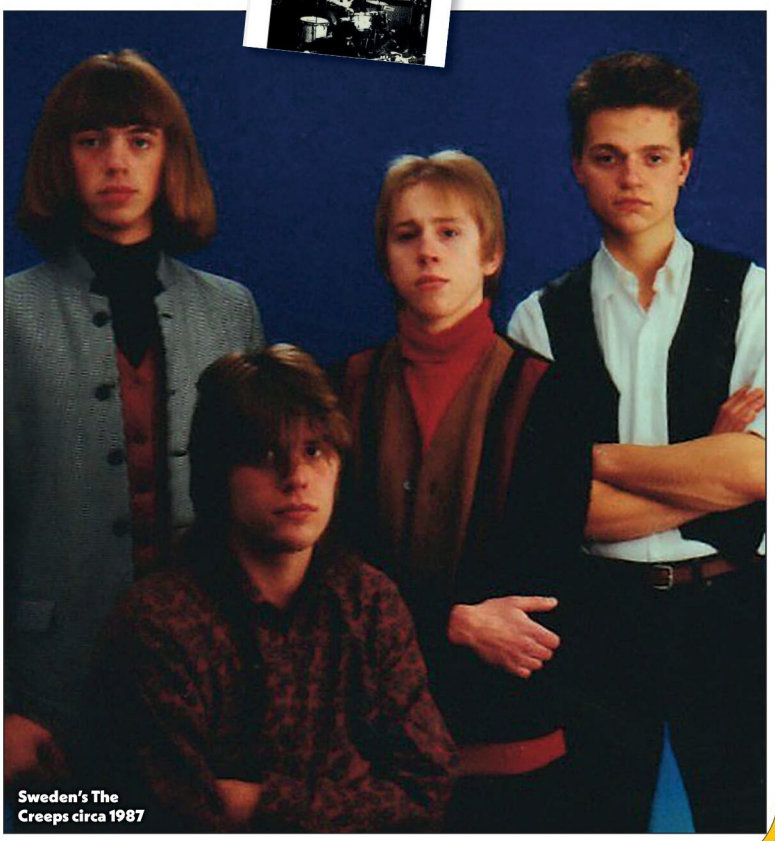
I hope today's current *Nuggets*-style artists take note as I'm hearing lots of good songs released in recent times undermined by poor production. It's cheap today to set up a good quality home studio and produce high class sounds.

Keep up the good work, really been enjoying the magazine lately.

Thanks,

Rieuwert Buitenga

Yes indeed. The under-looked '80s is now very much what the neglected areas of the '60s were for many years. Readers are loving our coverage, so we can certainly widen the net. A copy of The American Dream's 1969 Rundgren Demos *is on the way to you.*



Sweden's The Creeps circa 1987

THIS '80S. NOT THAT '80S.

Hi Jon,

Loved issue #141. It covers the '80s that is never remembered by the mass media. It's the one we lived through.

Congratulations,

Mac Hernández via Instagram

Correct.

ENDLESS JOURNEY

Morning All,

The first Teardrops cover story since 1981, which is kind of weird.

It's a terrific piece by Ben and a great spread. I'm so pleased somebody spoke to Mick Finkler and Paul Simpson, which none of the other writers bothered to do. I'm guilty myself of not speaking to Mick. It's great that you did a spread on and around 'Tales From The Drug Attic', which I organised all those years ago. It was a great time with Julian, Cally and myself all making cassettes for each other. I still have all the ones you highlighted. I think I'll give myself a blast of the first *Endless Journey*.

Thanks to you all.

Best,

Mick Houghton

You were there Mick. Pivotal. So happy you liked it. It was a thoroughly deserved cover.

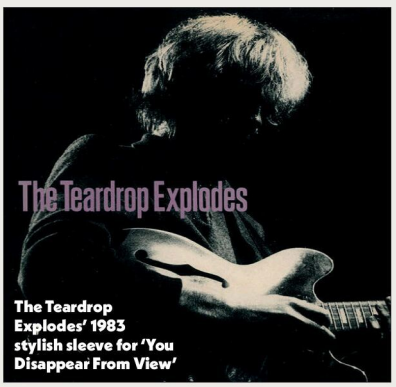
REWARD

Hi Jon,

I thoroughly enjoyed your piece on The Teardrop Explodes in last month's issue. I was lucky enough to catch them live at McGonagles Nite Club, South Anne Street, Dublin during 1981/82. During a splendid version of 'Reward' I could have sworn Julian Cope sang "Bless my cotton socks I'm in the nude" instead of the "Bless my cotton socks I'm in the news" recorded version. Perhaps someone had spiked me and I was having an aural trip alongside my distorted other four senses. Since that night I can only ever hear the word "nude" and not the word "news" whenever 'Reward' comes on the radio. I know I'm being a bit silly here but if one has one's socks on then is a body truly nude?

Tom Kinsella

You weren't the only one. I thought the same. Straight up. Brilliant. Great minds.



The Teardrop Explodes' 1983 stylish sleeve for 'You Disappear From View'

HAVING A GOOD TIME (AIN'T NO CRIME)

Hi Jon,

Right you lot. What are you playing at? The Bevis Frond, Paul Moody, Edgar Jones, The Direct Hits, The Teardrop Explodes. Whatever next The Playn Jayn? Doh! I've tugged your sleeve about the PJ before, so thank you. The latest subscription issue arrived, I removed it from the large envelope, passed out at the delights in store for me. I haven't even reached the review section yet. What a magazine. I sometimes wonder how you can get any better. *Shindig!* you are beyond compare,

I thank you,

Nick White

Thank you. We're all for the vocal minority. We listen. Glad you loved it so much.

CHAMBER DOOR

Hello Jon,

The article on The Playn Jayn was a blast from my past. Colleague Phil Suggitt did an admirable job. Can hardly add to it but will try anyway.

Pre their Marquee-storming album, they self-released two songs on a white label seven-inch in 1983. A-side 'Chamber Door' remained officially unreleased till this day. B-side 'Mezcal' is the same version as on the mentioned promo 45.

As their future regarding a re-release of all their recordings looks very uncertain, hopefully at least a few songs which, as far as I know, only feature on live tapes from the era exist in recorded form. Specifically, 'Speed' and 'Insanity' ought to be heard one day.

Anyway, what a (live-) band. As we used to say back in the day: Let's hear it for the Jayn!

All the best,

Walter Stuart

I'm still hoping that a label like Cherry Red will come up with a nice package after reading this.

HANG TEN!

Hi Jon,

I've subscribed to this magazine for around three years and always look forward in anticipation each month to the new issue.

I've just finished June's copy and I have to say that I learnt so much about bands I didn't know too much about. I knew bits and pieces about Teardrop Explodes, but absolutely nothing about The Soup Dragons, The Creeps and The Playn Jayn. The depth to the articles is incredible and a round of applause should go to the writers and researchers.

I like to read about new bands which appear under the heading of "It's a happening thing". Bands I would never hear about... and although I am a keen vinyl collector, I can stream each band to see if it's my thing before hunting down the vinyl release.

Keep up the fantastic work...I would like to personally encourage your readers to subscribe as it is so important to keep publications like *Shindig!* to keep going for as long as there are stories to bring us each month!

Any more special issues in the pipeline? I would love to see a mod turning into Dandy mod/ psychedelia '60s type of thing... if you get my drift!

Kevin Gregory

Thanks Kevin. Subscriptions are definitely the way to go. We have covered dandy mod and early UK psych since inception. A bookazine or digital bookazine of these articles could work.

ONLINE

Hey Jon,

I, and no doubt all your readers, love the eclectic mix you cover. Indeed, that mix reminds me of the heyday of "our kind of music". There was a choice of radio stations (particularly pirates), offering the opportunity to hear all the diverse, amazing new music being created.

Shindig! features a vast array of such music, much being created here and now. However where are the deejays playing this music? Where is the station featuring it to a wide audience?

Please keep writing.

Love,

Phil Meckiff

I do enjoy Iggy Pop on 6 Music, but surely must mention our very own Broadcast on Soho Radio. All shows are archived on the site.

LAST CLOUD HOME

Hi Jon,

Thanks for such a great magazine. I've always enjoyed Marco Rossi's reviews (despite being pretty selective when it comes to prog). But the review of his new CD was a revelation about areas where his taste overlaps much more with mine. I ordered it and have listened to it about 15 times in the last four days. Among other wonders, he covers Orange Bicycle's 'LA' – which I always thought was about the best UK version of West Coast sunshine-pop ever recorded (though 'Last Cloud Home' runs it a close second – so if you could ask Mr. Rossi to go back to the bedroom and get that one done, that would be great). Anyway, this got me thinking, would Orange Bicycle be a good subject for an article, or Wil Malone a candidate for 20 Questions? I gather he had a pretty eventful musical life after the band. Thanks for keeping me always looking forward to the next month.

Best Wishes,

Joel Robbins

Marco writes:

Thanks so much for your kind comments, Joel: you've made my day! I did contemplate 'Last Cloud Home' at one point, funnily enough: it'll probably be on the shortlist if Flattery II *ever becomes a thing...*

If I'm honest, that stuff is far closer to my heart than any prog, although I do love a lot of the latter and still find it intriguing that it remains such a deeply etched line in the sand for a lot of people. One of the most profound joys of getting older has been the steady dismantling of fences, which means I can now enjoy This Heat, Hamilton Bohannon, Beefheart, The Bee Gees, Black Midi and The Association with an equivalent and open fervour

And as Jon intimates, you're so right about Wil Malone! A hero all over the place, and a great idea for a deep delve in the pages of Shindig! *His 1970 Fontana album is an autumnal favourite of mine.*

Thanks again, Joel: I'm so glad the CD is hitting the spot!

Orange Bicycle considering the last cloud home

SHINDIG!

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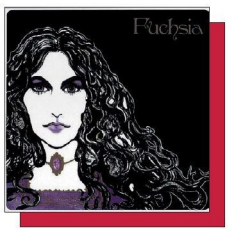
shindiggin'

What's HOT on the Shindig! turntable

The brand new releases, compilation standouts, old album tracks and dusty 45s rockin' our world this month



FUCHSIA
Me And My Kite

Despite being commonly tagged folk-rock or prog-rock, Surrey six-piece aggregation Fuchsia's lone album – released on the short-lived Pegasus label in 1971 – is an uncategorisable, shape-shifting period piece that inhabits a similar "oh so English" place to contemporary works by Ora and Pete Atkin. Probably its best-known track is 'Me And My Kite', a charming lighter-than-air ode to the joys of the outdoor pursuit that recalls Syd Barrett's innocent whimsy and lent its name to the Swedish hippy-pop commune whose new album *A Safe Trail* continues its adventurous spirit.

Available on: Fucshia (GUERSSEN LP)

PEARL & THE OYSTERS FEATURING LAETITIA SADIER
Read The Room

Pearl & The Oysters (the France-to-California-via-Florida duo of Juliette Davis and Joachim Polack) make the kind of technicolour bubbly synth-pop that goes well with the hottest days of summer. Their sonic palette is as rich as the artwork that appears on new album *Coast To Coast*, on which vintage keys and screens mingle with exotic birds and an array of day-glo retro-futuristic knick-knack. On highlight 'Read The Room', an electro-psych gem with baroque flair, they add swathes of daydreaming vocals courtesy of the queen of prismatic pop herself, Laetitia Sadier, with properly delightful (and, you guessed it, Stereolab-esque) results.

Available on: Coast To Coast (STONES THROW LP)

THE SLEAZOIDS
The Black Lodge

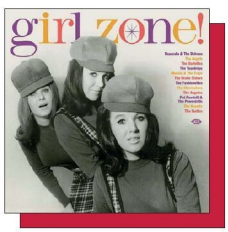
Tucked away on the flipside of this Sheffield three-piece's 'VHS Death' single, issued just a couple of months ago on Spinout Nuggets, 'The Black Lodge' is a somewhat darker, way more formidable proposal than the otherwise cool garage-punk style moves of the A-side. What we have here is a terrifying mess of tangled, mangled sonics which call to mind those otherworldly explorations of The Red Crayola's free-form freak-outs if re-enacted – with extra shard-spearing chaotics – by the guitar-toting younger cousins of the city's ancient electronic terrorists Cabaret Voltaire.

Available on: SPINOUT NUGGETS 45

THE HANNAH BARBERAS
Happy Winter

The punny name (from the award-winning American animation studio) doesn't diminish The Hannah Barberas' sense of fun and a good time. And while the obvious strains of 'Tomorrow Belongs To Me' may tug at your heart-strings while swaying to this folksy sea shanty singalong, the tale of seasonal loss that left the good times behind is buoyed by optimistic yearnings for a brighter future of fresh starts and new experiences. A weeping sax compliments Lucy Formolli's genuinely sympathetic vocals that'll have you buying rounds for the locals long before the final strains of melancholia waltz out the door.

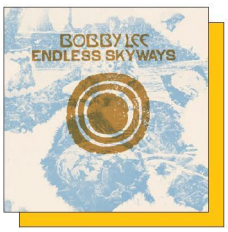
Available on: Fantastic Tales Of The Sea (SPINOUT NUGGETS LP)



REPARATA & THE DELRONS
Panic

Originally released in 1968 as the B-side of 'Saturday Night Didn't Happen' on US label Mala to little acclaim, this girl group marvel hits a sweet spot at the 20-second mark with a swooning, three-part vocal chorus. The lyrics and execution perfectly capture the feeling of helplessness that arrives with the first flutters of attraction, while the crunchy production and heavily echoed handclaps could have been the work of Joe Meek. No surprise that the feverish pace inevitably found favour on northern soul dancefloors.

Available on: Girl Zone! (ACE LP)



BOBBY LEE
Acid Grassland

This track's title positively screams cosmic-ountry! You could be forgiven for thinking its creator came from the American Midwest, but Bobby Lee is a guitarist based in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, a city more associated with steelworks, shopping centres and *The Full Monty* than it is with mind-melding psychedelic Americana. This instrumental is lo-fi, DIY, and sounds like it was composed under the influence of peyote. Swampy effect-drenched guitars riff over primitive beats put together on a vintage drum machine. Track it down on Bobby newly released third LP or check out the equally trippy stop-motion video on YouTube.

Available on: Endless Skyways (TOMPKINS SQUARE LP)

PRELUDE
Meet On The Ledge

The Gateshead vocal trio scored their only hit with an *a capella* version of Neil Young's 'After The Goldrush' in 1974, but were backed by a full band, including Isaac Guillory on lead guitar, on this equally striking (and surprisingly funky) cover of Richard Thompson's Fairport classic. A hidden gem on their third album, '75's *Owlcreek Incident*, 'Meet On The Ledge' was mystifyingly overlooked for single release. As with their melancholy take on 'Goldrush', Prelude bring out the theme of failed dreams and crushed hopes that, by the mid-70s, seemed to be all that remained of '60s idealism; but there's still the hope: "If you really mean it, it all comes round again".

Available on: Floating On The Breeze: The Dawn Anthology (ESSENTIAL CD)

SAM BURTON
I Don't Blame You

The honey-voiced Sam Burton (also heard on Sylvie's wonderful mini-album) will satiate fans of masterful string-laden orch-pop from the mid to late '60s, with this offering from new album *Dear Departed*. Producer Jonathan Wilson brings the forlorn mood to the fore with a subtle production enveloped in Drew Erickson's lush string arrangements, gently picked nylon-stringed guitar, electric bass, and some strategically placed percussion and female backing vocals. It's like Leonard Cohen in a slightly more upbeat mood working with Phil Spector and Robert Kirby.

Available on: Dear Departed (PARTISAN LP)

TYRANNOSAURUS REX
Chariots Of Silk

This slice of pagan pop perfection is the perfect vehicle for appreciating the often-unsung genius of Steve Peregrin Took. Took was always an inventive percussionist – witness the punk primitivism he pounds out of a Chad Valley toy drum kit here – but where he excelled was in his vocals. Never one for repetition, he experiments with each verse, from offering no vocal support to full counter-melodies. The effect is sublime, no more so than when he and Marc Bolan combine voices in a balmy coda evoking that dreamtime version of England that only they inhabited. Bolan may have been a wizard but Took was the alchemist.

Available on: Unicorn (UNIVERSAL LP)

IAN CARMICHAEL
Lemon Twist

A while back, a fake LP cover did the rounds on the internet, claiming to be an album of psychedelic hits performed by quintessential gent Ian Carmichael. Still, if the *School For Scoundrels* star never did get his teeth into 'In-A-Gadda-Da Vida', he did record an album in 1960 called *Girl Crazy*, produced by *Carry On* composer Eric Rogers and sporting excellent cover art showing our man looking none-more English in bowler hat and suit. Most of the tracks within are polite Noel Coward-esque fripperies but this take of seduction gone wrong is a doozy of laidback English style.

Available on: Girl Crazy (DECCA LP)

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it's a **happening** thing

California dreamers Mapache. L-R: Sam Blasucci, Cam Wehrle, Clay Finch and Steve Didelot

Reflecting Everything

MAPACHE return with a personal slow-burn collection reflecting the moods of Sam Blasucci and Clay Finch. **ANDY FYFE** catches up with the duo and talks California, adult life, religion and the making of *Swinging Stars*

Just how large a part do we believe that our environment plays in music? Does Norway's dark and endless night impact on doom-metal? Would irreverent, explosive garage-rock have happened without the uptight, buttoned-down "I Like Ike" '50s? Would punk trash have risen from London's streets without the roads literally being lined with rubbish bags during the '70s bin strikes? And would we have mellow, hazy folk-rock without the soft breeze coming in off the Pacific mingling with the weed smoke drifting down from the groovy enclave of '60s Laurel Canyon?

If ever the proof was in the pudding, for four albums Los Angeles duo Mapache have been the embodiment of just how the immediate world can shape music. It's even more apparent on their latest album, *Swinging Stars*, released next month. Even if you didn't know that Sam Blasucci and Clay Finch were raised in Southern California, it's unlikely *Swinging Stars* could have been recorded anywhere else than the West Coast. Recorded at Panoramic House, a hilltop studio overlooking the gentle golden arc of Stinson Beach, north of San Francisco, it's full of gentle harmonies, slightly psychedelic, shimmering arrangements and sweeping panoramas. Basically, it's the SoCal idyll in musical form.

"I get the impression that what people think growing up in Southern California is like, is actually what it's like," says Blasucci. "We grew up spending a lot of time at the beach or outside, and the pace is just a lot slower, the lifestyle of a lot of areas very laid back. I mean, it's not *The Brady Bunch*, but a lot of what is stereotypical about California I've noticed to be pretty accurate."

One song on *Swinging Stars*, 'What A Summer', particularly embodies the breathtaking beach view out the windows of the studio, evoking a hazy California past of Pendletons and patchouli, a paisley '60s unblemished by Vietnam and Manson and love was all you needed. "I think that song's so close to where we were," says Blasucci. "I can't entirely speak for it totally because it's Clay's song, but that description hits home with me."

"I think it's something that comes out in the kind of age that we're entering,"

"We're trying to figure out adult life. I don't know if that ever goes away, trying to find our place"

Finch continues, finishing his partner's comment. "We're trying to figure out adult life. I don't know if that ever goes away, trying to find our place and figure it out, but if any of that comes across then, yeah, I think we did our job on that one."

The simpatico ease shared by Finch and Blasucci, the closeness that allows them to finish each other's thoughts and ideas, is obvious even via Zoom while they're in different parts of California. Blasucci is sitting in his house in Ojai, a small valley city in Ventura County, while Malibu resident Finch beams in from the Venice Beach surf shop where he works a day job. For the pair who once lived so deeply in each other's pockets that they shared a bedroom above a studio, it's some rare physical distance.

Now in their mid-20s, Blasucci and Finch first met at high school in La Cañada, nestled in the foothills on the northern edges of LA. Instantly drawn to each other, the teenagers began playing music together in a school class and quickly moved on to writing songs. "We both liked to write a lot of songs, mostly in, like, math class or whatever," laughs Finch. "Some of those first songs actually ended up on our debut album, written back when were, like, 16 or 17," continues Blasucci. "I guess it's hard to let go of things you write when you're that age, it all seems incredibly important and deep."

But just in case you might think the laidback vibe is in any way interrupted by a staunch work ethic, Finch nips any such suggestion in the bud. "I can't say I have very much discipline, for better for worse, when it comes to writing songs. It's not a very methodical practice," he says with a resigned chuckle.

After stuttering starts playing in bands – including a Grateful Dead tribute act – the pair went their separate ways between 2013 and 2015: Finch to college while Blasucci took a very different path, living in Mexico as a Mormon missionary. While the opening lyric about "Insecure and sexually repressed religions…" from the new album's lead track 'People Please' touches on his church-raised past, it's a subject few writers who aren't in Christian rock bands or Nick Cave openly touch on. "Oh I *love* to talk about it," offers Blasucci. "There are a lot of issues surrounding humans and the way they organise themselves with power and hierarchies, and a lot of organised religions are on the frontlines of a lot of those issues, of rules we make for ourselves and the way those can affect different groups of people."

Although raised a Mormon, ultimately he was unable to reconcile his different lives within the church and music, so he chose the latter soon after returning from his ministry, and got back in touch with Finch. "I decided that I didn't want to be a part of a group that had so many issues that I couldn't help to solve, and I felt like I was better off to just try to be a good person in society. There's a notion of service that's very noble and good which sort of attracted me to being a missionary in the first place, but the intensity of the details of the religion and being a musician ultimately kind of counteract each other."

So, for now, Mapache (it's Spanish for raccoon, by the way) are more concerned with counteracting the world's bad vibes, spreading a bit of light through lysergic love and peace via a lens filtered with the kind of bucolic country-rock of early Eagles and middle of the night dips into the ocean of Bread's folk-pop. And who doesn't want to be influenced by that kind of environment?

Reflecting Everything is out on 18th August on Innovative Leisure

Blue Velvet

IRAINA MANCINI survived a TV talent show and a short-lived Liverpool supergroup to emerge in 2021 as a performer of huge talent and fine taste. She's a deejay of renown, plying her collection of vintage soul, garage and rare groove at clubs and events worldwide, and hosting a show from *Shindig!*'s home at Soho Radio.

With her much-anticipated solo debut about to hit the shelves, Iraina talks us through some of the sounds that fed into its creation

FRANÇOISE HARDY
Viens
(Sonopresse LP, 1971)

Wow, this album gave me a big punch in the stomach when I first heard it. It's just so gorgeous, lush and full of passion. The title track still gives me goosebumps every time I hear it. It's one of Françoise's lesser-known albums, more experimental, so sometimes gets overlooked. I'm a huge fan of Françoise – her songs really touch me, and her style is something I've adored since I was a teenager. I wanted a big, cinematic song on my album to close it. I had *Viens* spinning around my head, 'Take A Bow' is what transpired.

SERGE GAINSBOURG
Histoire de Melody Nelson
(Philips LP, 1971)

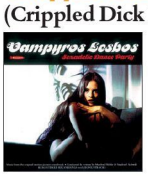
This is one of my favourite albums of all time. It made such an impact on me when I first heard it, I remember thinking, "I want to sound exactly like that." To me there's nothing cooler than this album, the film that goes with it is incredible too. 'En Melody' is my favourite song on the album, what a groove! I love the bonkers bit where Serge uses Jane Birkin's words and laughter cut up, to create a really trippy piece of music. It really inspired the song 'Shotgun' on my album – I went into the vocal booth and closed my eyes and just went for it, meowing, laughing and just losing myself in the music. Some of it came out terribly, some of it was brilliant and stayed in the song.

"I want people to listen to my music and feel that they are transported, like they are a character in a stylish retro thriller, a technicolour dream!"

MINNIE RIPERTON
Les Fleur
(GRT A-side, 1971)

This song is a masterpiece, each section is so unique and powerful. It really inspired the song 'Undo The Blue' on my album, I love Minnie's falsetto vocals on the verses and big crescendo build just before each chorus. Her harmonies are almost operatic sometimes, they build so much drama and tension. I tried to incorporate this on the middle-eight section of 'Undo The Blue', with waving melodies and spoken word. I love the idea her song is about a flower opening in bloom, she's releasing her true beauty and potential into the world. My song has a similar sentiment in its meaning; it's about fresh starts and reinvention.

MANFRED HÜBLER & SIEGFRIED SCHWAB
Vampyros Lesbos
(Crippled Dick Hot Wax! LP, 1995)

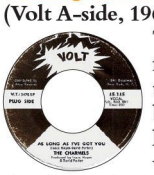


I have always been obsessed with B-movies and this has got to be up there as one of the coolest. I totally fell in love with the soundtrack as well as the visuals. I love its spooky sexiness and psychedelic madness. I listened to the *Vampyros Lesbos* soundtrack a lot when starting to write songs under my own name. It made me realise that visuals for me are just as important as the sound. I want people to listen to my music and feel that they are transported, like they are a character in a stylish retro thriller, a technicolour dream! It's how I feel when I write them, so hopefully that translates.

JACQUES DUTRONC
Les Cactus
(Vogue A-side, 1966)

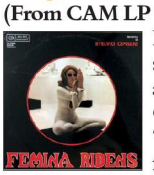
I'm a big fan of Jacques Dutronc, I love the raw energy of his records. This song in particular remains one of my favourites, it's just relentless and hits you right in the gut. 'Les Cactus' was a big reference for songs like 'Deep End' and 'Cannonball' on my album. I love '60s garage and Jacques does it so well, his swagger and vocal style are incredible. I often spin 'Les Cactus' at my deejay gigs. The section in the middle where all the instruments just get faster and faster, building into this sonic frenzy makes people go wild on the dancefloor.

THE CHARMELS
As Long As I've Got You
(Volt A-side, 1967)



This is one of my favourite songs of all time, famously sampled by Wu-Tang Clan. I just love the melody in the verses and the release on the chorus that opens up to sing, "I feel free as a bird!" – beautiful. I injected a lot of signature girl-group elements on my album, on songs like 'Deep End' and 'Need Your Love'. I love bands like The Shangri-Las, Ronettes and Shirelles, the instant melodies and hooky harmonies that provide a bed for the soaring vocals. I always loved spoken word in songs, much like The Shangri-Las did on 'Leader Of The Pack'. I think that's where my inspiration came from, and I do the same in lots of my songs. I think jumping from singing to speaking adds drama and intensity.

STELVIO CIPRIANI
Mary's Theme
(From CAM LP *Femina Ridens*, 1969)



I'm a massive fan of Italian soundtracks from the '60s and '70s and Stelvio Cipriani is just fantastic. 'Mary's Theme' is taken from the 1969 film *Femina Ridens*. It's so lush and has these beautiful operatic vocals that give it a magical, otherworldly feel. I have Italian heritage so perhaps that's why I feel connected to the music. I love the cinema and the romance of Stelvio's compositions, I try and bring that cinema into my own sound. I want each song to be a theme to its own story, transportive and stylish like those Italian movies.

NANCY SINATRA
Boots
(Reprise LP, 1966)

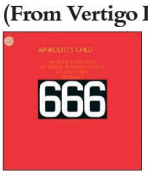
Nancy is a massive inspiration for my

album. So much so, on my song 'Shotgun' I pay tribute to her, singing "Shoot, bang bang!". I've always loved her music, her melodies – sweet but with a punch of attitude. When I wrote 'Sugar High', Nancy was echoing around my head. I wanted something on the album that had that old school Hollywood ballad, a moment of pure dreamy deliciousness. I wrote it about falling in love, that moment where all your senses are heightened and you're almost in a dreamlike state. I'm a big fan of her album covers as well; she always looks so powerful and feminine. I had her in mind, creating the artwork for my album. 'As Tears Go By' must be one of the most romantic songs of all time – I listen to that a lot and never tire of it.

APHRODITE'S CHILD

The Four Horsemen

(From Vertigo LP *666*, 1972)

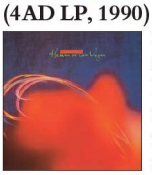


I love psychedelic rock. I spin a lot of things I discover on my Soho Radio show. 'The Four Horsemen' absolutely blew me away when I first heard it, that beautiful wailing vocal at the beginning. As I said before, I love music that is transportive, and psychedelia is just that for me, its hypnotic. I love the backing vocals that are almost like a chant, really easy to sing along to and a strong countermelody to the main vocal. This song inspired [Iraina's 2022 single] 'Do It (You Stole The Rhythm)' quite a lot: a big release on the chorus, that dance under the sunlight feel, it's so uplifting and hopeful.

COCTEAU TWINS

Heaven Or Las Vegas

(4AD LP, 1990)

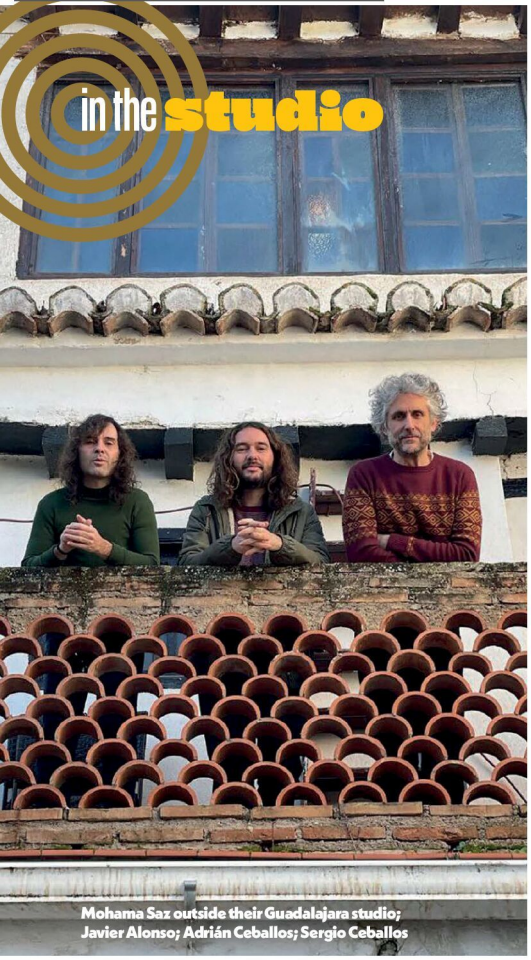


I'm a huge Cocteau Twins fan, their songwriting has been a huge inspiration for me and my writing. The melodies and harmonies are so rich and emotive. The first time I heard them I almost had a transcendental experience. I remember thinking, "Wow, music can really take you outside your body." It really did bring a tear to my eye. Their interwoven vocals are something I have always created in all my songs on the album, especially on choruses and middle-eights. The producers I work with always joke that I never stop harmonising, I record layer open layer in the studio, much to the producer's dismay! I love experimenting with vocals, a lot of that comes from Cocteau Twins.

As told to Andy Morten

Undo The Blue is out on 18th August on Needle Mythology

Iraina Mancini channels the classics



Mohama Saz outside their Guadalajara studio; Javier Alonso; Adrián Ceballos; Sergio Ceballos

Yai Yai

Madrid's intrepid musical travellers **MOHAMA SAZ** mix Anatolian rock and folk with psychedelia, Euro prog-funk, the widescreen cinematics of Morricone, and fresh experimental techniques as they concoct their forthcoming album in rural Spain.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS is all ears

On the back of December 2020's dense production *Quemar Las Naves* the Madrid-based trio are currently in the studio putting the final touches to their as yet still untitled fifth album. The songs were written between Madrid and Pastrana, a small town in Guadalajara, where the band has restored a gorgeous 16th century house. "It has a small recording studio where we can spend as much time as we want without interruptions or the distractions of the big city," Javier Alonso explains. "We've been writing and recording demos there since we bought the house."

When asked what music they were imbibing during their peace and isolation, he utters a list of acts that can always be spotted in that unique Mohama Saz fusion: Orchestra Of Spheres, Tinariwen, Fela Kuti, Ersen, Los Chunguitos, Triana, Las Grecas, Fikret Kizilok, Motorhead and plenty of traditional Turkish, Armenian and Andean folk, all of unknown origin, are mentioned.

"We always record live, and it's very important to have the minimum amount of stress to get the most out of each take. What the band is feeling is crucial. In our music the vibe is very important for us to create"

To record they returned to the the peaceful and inspirational Santa Maria De La Vega studio located just outside Granada, in Andalucía. "It is owned by our producer and friend Carlos Díaz, who is well-known in Spain.

"We love that studio, as for us it is essential to have a peaceful environment to take refuge in and feel at home during the four or five days we record. We always record live, and it's very important to have the minimum amount of stress to get the most out of each take. What the band is feeling is crucial. In our music the vibe is very important for us to create. It has been a positive experience working with Carlos Díaz again. He is both a friend and a fan of the band and is very involved in the production." Like the previous album this is an all-analogue affair. "Recording this way gives the music an organic texture, with more weight," says Alonso. "However, a few small digitally recorded details are added in the end, as always."

During the sessions Díaz had the idea to add compelling layers of percussion and synthesisers. "While we all like to experiment in the creative process, the core sound of Mohama Saz remains," states Alonso of their fundamental baglama saz-driven songs. "It will always carry the melodic instrumental weight from beginning to end."

'Yai Yai' is out in September on Humo Internacionale. The album follows

Path Through The Forest

Beautiful and fleeting, the ex-Beachwood Sparks project **MYSTIC CHORDS OF MEMORY** is reignited via its 20th anniversary vinyl debut.

CAMILLA AISA ventures into the mystic

"We had a long-distance love at first," Chris Gunst says, looking back on the early days of his relationship with Jen Cohen. They lived in different cities; she was a member of San Francisco indie-poppers The Aislers Set and he was equally busy with Beachwood Sparks in LA. Often they'd try to join each other on little tours. In 2002, after The Aislers Set opened for Belle & Sebastian on the East Coast, Chris offered to drive the van all the way back to California. Camping along the way, they stopped to visit Mount Rushmore and the Black Hills of South Dakota, noticing a printed version of Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address, and one expression in particular – "*the mystic chords of memory*". "We were really into the *Mysticism Of Sound And Music* book at the time as well, so we liked that mystic component," Jen recalls. Their respective bands were about to peter out, and the couple wanted to make music together. Now they had the perfect name for it.

As the world outside got louder and scarier, solace was sought in a tiny cabin in the forest. "It was a weird time," Chris reflects. "9/11, the Iraq war… We had toured a lot back then. I remember wanting to feel safe in this little house, and I think the music reflects this quiet safety: it's small, whispery and quiet."

Jen has fond memories of their first home together that was nestled in the redwoods. "The creek was running down this very peaceful street. There was a little downstairs room where we put a shag carpet – it was extra cosy." When not bathing at the creek or lighting fires at night, they recorded new songs. Along with their guitars, a sampler that allowed them to experiment was used – sampling the classical records they were listening to, for instance. "We were marijuana farmers at the time, too. If you do that and have a sampler laying around… something's gonna happen," Chris laughs. Two decades on from the release of their self-titled debut, the pair have become professionals in different fields (naturopathic medicine, psychotherapy) that, like the music they first made together, concentrate on healing. After some time they're slowly going back to live performances – "We wanted to show our daughter we weren't so lame," they laugh.

"We were up in the forest," remembers Jen. "That's where we put down our roots. Twenty years later, I feel like we've grown some trees from that".

"I remember wanting to feel safe in this little house, and I think the music reflects this quiet safety: it's small, whispery and quiet"

Mystic Chords Of Memory is out on 14th July on Big Potato

Into the mystic with Chris Gunst and Jen Cohen

Sam Burton kills some time in the depature lounge
PHOTO: JACOB BOLL

Soul Searching

SAM BURTON's expansive new album echoes the era-defining work of Jimmy Webb, Harry Nilsson and Glen Campbell. **DUNCAN FLETCHER** discovers an artist with a deep commitment to his craft

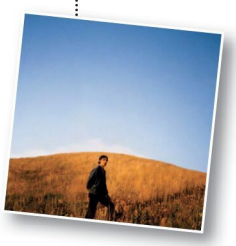
Sam Burton's 2020 debut album *I Can Go With You* marked him out as an artist to watch. Since then, he's appeared on the much-loved *Sylvie* album, and now releases a second solo album, *Dear Departed*, which maintains his commitment to soul-baring songs while branching out texturally. "Well, sonically they are different because one is bare and the other is lush," he tells *Shindig!* "*I Can Go With You* feels like someone at the start of something, while *Dear Departed* has been away long enough that it cannot go back to the same place."

Moving has been a central theme in Burton's life recently. The last few years have seen him bounce between his home state of Utah, rural Northern California, and Los Angeles, where he hooked up with Jonathan Wilson who produced the new album. "I met him day one of recording and we started immediately. I can't say enough good about Jonathan. He's hilarious, scary smart, and incredibly musically gifted. He's very professional and can work really fast with vision. He's also a musical encyclopaedia and so he gets any reference you throw at him and he can execute it."

The resulting album has classicist song writing, with a baked-in sadness and sense of reflection. There's also a continuity of sound across its 10 tracks, although not one that was overly planned. "Any cohesion is due to the songs being written in a short time frame and that they were recorded live and quickly by the same band," says Sam. "One of the touchstones of production inspiration for me was a song called 'Palo Alto' by Bobby Jameson."

Dear Departed was recorded at Wilson's Five Star Studios, apart from the Robert Kirby-esque strings which were added at LA's Sunset Sound Studio. Unfortunately for Sam, day job constraints meant he was unable to attend. "I couldn't get work off at the restaurant. Jonathan sent me videos of the string players recording in this legendary studio and I'm laughing because I'm bussing tables all day. It just seemed funny to me."

Restaurant work may pay the bills, but creativity is where Sam's passion lies. "My hope is that my work can reflect life and its complexity. The title *Dear Departed* holds a tension. There is a new journey, and with that something is lost. Life goes on and nothing is black & white. There can be alienation in love and poverty in victory. The themes of the album to me reflect the spirit of wandering and searching within complex stories we are involved in or cast out of."



Dear Departed is out on 14th July on Partisan

Alan Roberts and Leonore Wheatley

Flying High

The Soundcarriers' Leonore Wheatley and Alan Roberts, aka singer-songwriter Jim Noir, are at the controls of new partnership **CO-PILOT**

"We always had a similar sense of harmony and melody, which made us feel compelled to collaborate on our own project." Good things take time and, in the case of Leonore Wheatley and Alan Roberts, it's been more than 10 years since they first met and their project Co-Pilot became airborne.

"The album itself has been in the works for a while, life got busy and we locked it up in the vaults," explains Wheatley. Both busy with their other musical ventures they were further disrupted by the impact of COVID.

When opportunity allowed them to work together, however, the music seems to have flowed easily. "Al's a whizz when it comes to production and demo writing, and I've always found it easy to write vocals, lyrics and other melodic parts to his music. We normally get into his studio, a treasure trove of instruments and I'll either have an idea of a chord progression or he'll have something he's mashed together on his computer and we'll build it up from there."

The result is a record of alluringly hypnotic electronica, not entirely dissimilar to that of Broadcast. "We didn't really have a specific plan or idea what our 'sound' was," adds Roberts, "but fortunately one just appeared to work itself out and we're really proud of it." The music the duo has made ranges from the rhythmic 'Brick' to the ethereal 'She Walks In Beauty', a song that takes its title from a poem by Lord Byron, with whom Wheatley shares a family connection.

Readers can also welcome the prospect of Co-Pilot taking flight from the studio into the concert venue. "It will be at least us two and a giant laser light show," teases Roberts. "I actually want to play drums but I've also got to sing and singing drummers look weird."

Please ensure your belt is secure and seat upright for a beguiling trip.

As told to Clive Webb

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CAPITANE RECORDS 2LP / 2CD
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NIGHT BEATS
RAJAN
FUZZ CLUB LP / CD
Landing somewhere between Spaghetti Western film score and psych-pop opus, by way of Anatolian funk, R&B and soul, 'Rajan' is the career-defining new Night Beats album from Danny Lee Blackwell

CURRENT AFFAIRS
OFF THE TONGUE
TOUGH LOVE LP / CD
Following 2019's singles collection Object & Subject, Off the Tongue is the debut full-length for Current Affairs. Their music straddles new-wave pop & gothic post-punk in the way that you should expect a Glasgow-Berlin band to do so: with grit & panache.

CHAIN OF FLOWERS
NEVER ENDING SPACE
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Michael James Tapscott pulls from outsider americana to create a captivating collection of country-folk songs full of doomed anti-heroes and beautiful losers, calling to mind Lee Hazlewood & Bobbie Gentry.

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Hot Ghee

Album number seven sees Danny Lee Blackwell trying new things with his **NIGHT BEATS** project. **BEN ADLAM** discovers its Indian roots

Rajan, meaning "king", "ruler" or "marked by boldness, bravery, or determination". Rajan is also the family name of Danny Lee Rajan Blackwell, the mastermind behind Night Beats, whose latest album *Rajan* is just about to hit the racks. *Rajan* is dedicated to Danny's mother.

"I think there's a lot of ways to honour someone and you know they're there," he tells *Shindig!* "There was a conversation I had with my mother when I was young. She told me, 'Be yourself and never give in to the man.' There's a real anti-authority streak in her and I definitely picked up on that, so here I am in the counterculture."

Of the album, Danny says "I finally get to flex my Indian muscle, my mother's from India. My first exposure to psychedelic music was The Beatles. Learning about all that stuff I saw these white people just loving India, I was proud seeing how Indian philosophy had implanted itself. It *IS* counterculture, the acceptance of where your mind can go, with your ancestors playing some part in that, but really your present mind tearing down walls and focusing on the craft of what it is that you do. That really strengthens what song writing is built on."

Rajan engages immediately and there's a freshness and urgency running through the album, something Danny puts down to many of the recordings being "first take". "It's a very unplanned sort of design that sounds like an oxymoron or paradox, but it's an acceptance of the present and of the Self. I like getting to the interesting stuff." There's plenty of "interesting stuff" on *Rajan* with Danny taking on a plethora of instruments. "On 'Hot Ghee' I'm playing a Turkish Baglama. It's just such a harmonious instrument. When I was 15 I made a record and I used sitar. I was already a snob at that point. I was gatekeeping the sitar and its usage in western music. I thought 'Okay George has a pass man,' other than that I was always just a little shit about people using sitars, because it's such a respectable instrument! My perspective on art is burn it down, you think there's rules, but whose rules? Get rid of them. I used sitar on 'Morocco Blues', and that was the first time I used sitar since then. It takes 20 years to decide things!"

However long it took, *Rajan* is a superb album encompassing Danny's wide and varied taste in music, literature and mysticism. To put all that across on record is no mean feat and definitely strikes of boldness, bravery and determination.

"There was a conversation I had with my mother when I was young. She told me, 'Be yourself and never give in to the man'"

Rajan is out on 14th July on Suicide Squeeze/Fuzz Club

Night Beats' Danny Lee Blackwell

hear & now

Sheffield rock 'n' roll bard **RICHARD HAWLEY** shares his current fave raves

LISTENING (OLD)

I've been listening to an old gospel group called The Harmonizing Four lately. Actually, I'm a bit obsessed with their records. I enjoy hunting down their pretty obscure singles, the best of which are on a label called Vee-Jay from the '50s. They started in the '20s and continued until the late '60s. The thing that grabs me about them is the beautiful harmonies and the insane bass baritone of Jimmy Jones; he had an incredible voice, they all did. I'm not religious at all but there's definitely a feeling of peace when I hear them singing, the music takes me to a different place.

LISTENING (NEW)

Liz Hanks' *Land*. It's only just come out. I've worked with Liz for over 20 years, she's played cello on nearly every album of mine. Phenomenal musician and a good friend. The album is a really beautiful, contemplative collection. It's her first solo record and I hope she makes many more.

READING

C J Sansom's *Tombland*. It's about the explosive peasants' rebellion in Norfolk in 1549, led by Robert Kett after the death of Henry VIII. England was bankrupt, inflation was ridiculously high, people were desperate and at the same time the aristocracy, gentry and landlords decided to enclose all the land so folks couldn't work the land or use it to feed their livestock. We had a child, King Edward VI, on the throne and some very shady characters acting on his behalf – a very bleak period of our history. Robert Kett was a man with deeply held principles, a rare thing at any time. It's brilliantly written. I've read all the Shardlake books, they kept me going through lockdown.

WATCHING

I went to see the film about Little Richard made by Lisa Cortés called *I Am Everything*. I'd seen most of the footage before but the premise of it is really interesting and the interviews shed new light on the great man. Richard was openly gay in America in the South, a very brave man. The film explores the connection between rock 'n' roll's outrageous nature and gay black culture in the Deep South. I've loved Little Richard's music since I was born – this film makes me admire him even more. The music is awesome. It's definitely worth your time.

As told to Andy Morten

28 Little Bangers From Richard Hawley's Jukebox is out now on Ace

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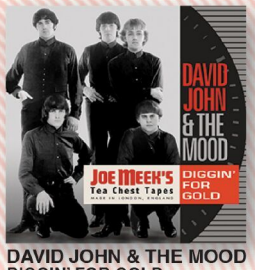

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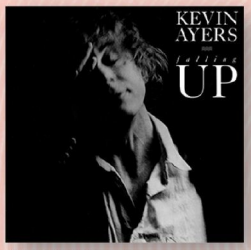

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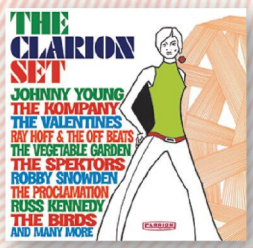

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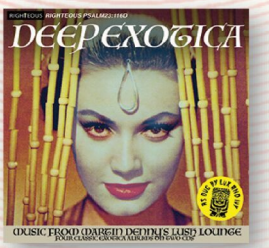

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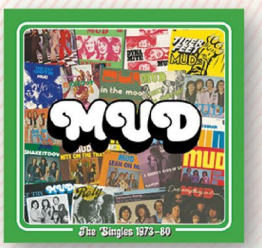

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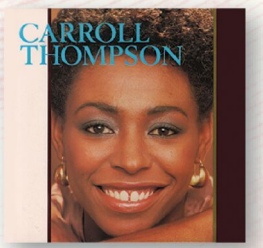

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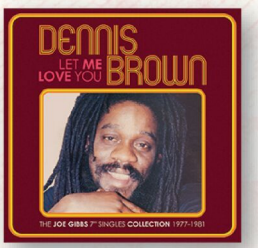

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This Valley Will Rise

Neo-psych and trippy graphics cast a meditative gauze over the opening sequence of Shane Meadows' latest TV work ***THE GALLOWS POLE***. **JON 'MOJO' MILLS** hears about Goat and grit from design director Ed Kevill-Davies

Discerning viewers will be aware of Shane Meadows' impressive catalogue of film and television shows. His latest outing is the four-part series *The Gallows Pole,* screened in June on the BBC and now available on iPlayer. The show in typical Meadows-style mixes rich, often darkly hilarious dialogue, delivered in thoroughly modern language, with a historical storyline concerning counterfeiters at the dawn of The Industrial Revolution. What concerns us here more though is the mind-blowing trippy opening credits, which roll out of over The Mystery Lights' psych-punk rave-up 'What Happens When You Turn The Devil Down?', taken from the New York band's self-titled 2016 album.

"Shane had already picked this tune for the title sequence," explains motion designer Ed Kevill-Davies of the leftfield choice. "I was blown away when he said he wanted the title sequence to last the length of the entire song, which is basically unheard of these days! He showed me an early cut of episode one and the gaps I needed to fill with my visuals, and as soon as I heard it, I was like, 'Okay, this is gonna be fun!'

"I cut to the track for my sections taking cues from the many great moments in the song, adding nice moments of punctuation to really help it pop."

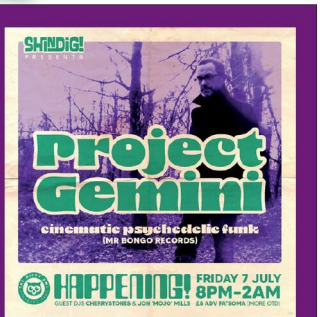
The tinted colour palettes are most certainly very psychedelic, a tad giallo, a tad '70s UK folk-horror. That the music of Goat also crops up in the show indicates where Meadows' head was at. "Again, Shane and his editor Lucas Roche had already loosely established a theme in terms of colour, which, as you say, felt very '70s. Psychedelia has always been a big influence for me in my work, so when Shane used 'that word' lots in the briefs I really went to town. Particularly for the blue-tinted ayahuasca-inspired shots of the stagmen and the smoke. The track certainly has a very authentic psychedelic leaning, so I suppose the colour palette was mostly inspired by that more than anything else. Shane was very clear in that he wanted it to feel like a vision or a dream, but beyond that it was up to me. It was truly a great experience. He's so great at appreciating the artistry involved and very supportive of the creative process."

The folk-horror iconography of the stagmen, standing stones and tinted film stock are combined with a very effective scene setter that unfolds across the credits. "Shane wanted to feature newspaper headlines which he made up; I think I made up a couple too. Lines that portent doom and destruction at the hands of industry. I then went away and studied newspapers of the time and created what you see in the sequence."

It's certainly one of the most affecting TV opening sequences that *Shindig!* has seen. And that music! If you're yet to watch the show, we encourage you to get your hands dirty pronto.

See Ed's work at coffeeand.tv and residence.pics
Watch Gallows Pole here: bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001mg3k

On Friday 7th July our very own Paul Osborne brings the wonderful **Project Gemini** to The *Shindig!* Happening for their second London gig. With Jack Sharp (Wolf People, Large Plants) on guitar, Bert Page (The Cromagnon Band) on keys, Tony Coote (PP Arnold, Steve Cradock) on drums and Paul leading on bass and vocals, the group is solidifying into a red-hot live unit, adding heavier nuances to the cinematic, groove-based psych of the *Children Of Scorpio* album cuts. Our guest deejay will be the fantastic Cherrystones. Not to be missed. The rest of 2023 sees the event take on a distinct garagey edge with shows from The Jack Cades, The Embrooks, Mimi & The Miseries and The Capellas. November will change that with an eagerly awaited London show from the witchy New Eves.
Visit finsburypark.thenightowl.club for tickets and info



good news

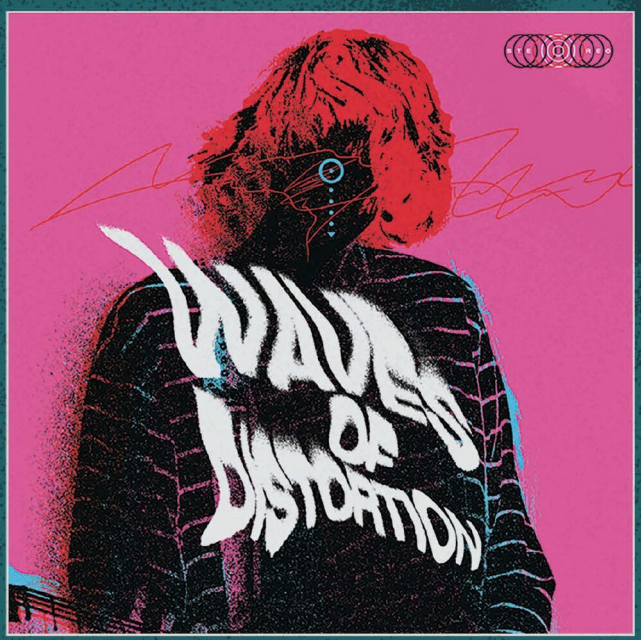
September sees the simultaneous release of two new albums from **THE CORAL** on their own Run On imprint, in association with Modern Sky UK. Name-dropping influences such as Lee Hazelwood, frontman James Skelly describes the first of the pair, *Sea Of Mirrors*, as "us imagining the theme tune for an Italian western directed by Fellini with a Richard Yates-written script". You can hear how that translates on lead single 'Wild Bird', featuring a string arrangement courtesy of The High Llamas' Sean O'Hagan. Other collaborators include actors Cillian Murphy and Jon Simm. If that wasn't enough, second album release *Holy Joe's Coral Island Medicine Show* is described as "a love letter" to the murder ballad tradition.
thecoral.co.uk

ABKCO Records has stepped up its **ROLLING STONES** reissue programme. In a move that will be welcomed by completists, the company is repressing both the UK and US versions of '60s albums originally issued with different track listings and sleeve artwork. June saw the appearance on 180-gram vinyl of two compilation albums: 1966's *Big Hits (Hide Tide And Green Grass)*, in both its American and British formats, and '67's US-only *Flowers*. Decca/London-era out-takes comp *Metamorphosis* follows this month. A total of 16 titles released between '64 and '75 are scheduled for non-sequential release in a campaign that runs into early 2024.
abkco.com

For all his contributions to rock music, **RONNIE LANE** remains a relatively unrecognised figure in the public consciousness. That's set to change on 17th August when Omnibus Press publishes *Anymore For Anymore: The Ronnie Lane Story*, the first biography of the late Small Faces/Faces/Slim Chance musician, written by David and Caroline Stafford. Based on extensive research including interviews with those close to Lane, the book promises to cast new light on his life, career and legacy, from childhood to his tragically early death. A story of artistic excellence and excess, *Shindig!* readers can look forward to an extract from the book in our next issue.
omnibuspress.com

The annual **BEATWAVE** event once again punches above its weight with its seventh "frenzy of surf, beat and garage" in the English south coast seaside town of Hastings. The fun-packed three-day event takes place between 21st and 23rd July and serves up live music from Graham Day & The Forefathers, The Fallen Leaves, Ye Nuns, The Beatpack, The Capellas and more, as well as a bucketful of deejays, a vintage market, record vendors and a game show! Dressing up is encouraged, trips across the road to the beach likewise. The cost? Nothing!
See Facebook and socials for more details

TWO PIERS



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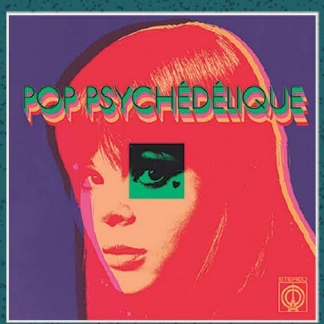

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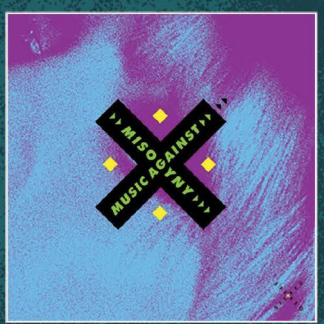

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Guardians Of The Garden

Swedish psychedelic pop band **ME AND MY KITES** are back with a new album after a five-year hiatus. **MICHAEL BJÖRN** gets charmed by its tuneful warmth and hazy wistfulness

What do you get when you cross Scandinavian melancholia with British psychedelia? "To us, Jan Johansson's *Jazz På Svenska* is just as big as The Beatles' *Revolver,*" says Me And My Kites bandleader David Svedmyr, softly.

In the early 2000s, David and his brothers formed various bands and he played with Lisa Isaksson on her records as Lisa o Piu. "We then started Lost In Rick's Wardrobe with Lisa," says David. "The idea was to play '60s psych-pop, anything except The Pink Floyd. That ended with us playing a whole concert of Pink Floyd songs!" In 2012 they transformed into Me And My Kites, named after a song from the 1971 album by UK progressive folk act Fuchsia. "I borrowed the album from my friend [Dungen guitarist] Reine Fiske and thought it was incredibly good. I remember taking his iPod for a whole week to listen. It was right up my street, a rather wobbly recording, yet completely magical." Today, David is quite happy with the name. "The band might be my project, but many others have been flying around me, turning ideas into good music."

Although his brothers have now left, causing some line-up changes, fourth album *A Safe Trail* is a cracker. "Our second album was recorded live. By capturing the spark of the moment it set the bar for me," he says. "But I am beginning to think that *A Safe Trail* flows even better." With a set of dreamlike yet melodic songs, it certainly lives up to what he likes to call "hippie-pop". He stresses "the importance of doing what you like together, growing plants and living in nature", and the album is an expression of that lifestyle. This often means unceremoniously launching a naive melody with a lone fiddle, flute or Mellotron and then adding layers. But the music could also wander off in a hallucination, as on the five-song cycle that starts and ends with 'The Guardian Of The Garden', mixing uncompleted idea sketches from the past. It also includes 'Aurora', inspired by a John Bauer painting and originally composed in high school, with a long-lost friend invited back to contribute lead vocals. That kind of nostalgia about growing up, and the unmediated experiences of childhood, are recurring sources of inspiration. The album ends with an emotional song about David's son and the awe-inspiring chain of life.

British psychedelia as viewed through a Swedish hippie-pop kaleidoscope.

A Safe Trail is out on 7th July on Porcelain

Me And My Kites. Flying high

next issue

LITTLE RICHARD
Freedom Blues: the rock 'n' roll forefather's tempestuous journey into the '70s

MELANIE
Hit records, spirituality and female empowerment in the Age of Aquarius

MARK VOLMAN
Looking back on The Turtles, Zappa, Flo & Eddie, Bolan and a life well-lived

THE BEES
The Isle Of Wight collective that mixed psych, indie and dub, 20 years later

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NIGHT BEATS
"RAJAN"
OUT 14/7 – LP/CD/DL

Landing somewhere between Spaghetti Western film score and psych-pop opus, 'Rajan' is the career-defining new album from Night Beats.

"Danny Lee Blackwell's is a different beat, a parallel universe of swirling colours and beats rattling like an outlaw across the desert at dusk." American Songwriter

"Acid-drenched outlaw music... Night Beats are one of the most exciting bands to come out of America in recent times." Clash Magazine

"Night Beats take psych-rock to new heights." The Quietus

THE MEN
"NEW YORK CITY"
OUT NOW – LP/CD/DL

Prolific Brooklyn institution The Men return with their ninth studio album, 'New York City'.

"A blazing full-length of proto-punk stompers built on a live and raw rock and roll sound." Bandcamp Daily

"An unpretentious garage-punk racket... the album's sheer boisterousness is a joy." Pitchfork

"A ferocious album that keeps the needle buried in the red." Paste Magazine

"New York City is an absolute blast." Shindig Magazine
★★★★★

THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN
"SUNSET 666"
OUT 4/8 – 2LP/CD/DL

Recorded at the Hollywood Palladium, Los Angeles in 2018, 'Sunset 666' is a new live album from The Jesus and Mary Chain recorded when the band toured the US with Nine Inch Nails.

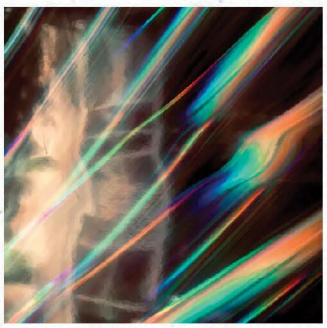
Captured straight from the desk over two nights, the discography-spanning 2LP includes tracks from 'Psychocandy', 'Darklands', 'Automatic', 'Honey's Dead', 'Stoned and Dethroned', 'Munki' and 'Damage and Joy'.

'Sunset 666' sees the Mary Chain deliver a set of classics with a composed intensity that shows these songs are as alive and powerful as they've ever been.

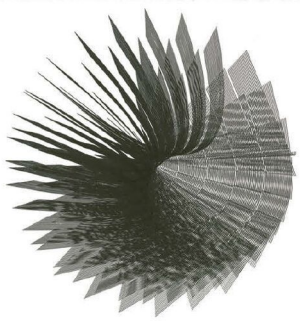
HELICON
"GOD INTENTIONS"
OUT NOW – LP/DL

MOONWALKS
"WESTERN MYSTERY TRADITION"
OUT NOW – LP/DL

THE BLACK DELTA MOVEMENT
"RECOVERY EFFECTS"
OUT NOW – LP/CD/DL

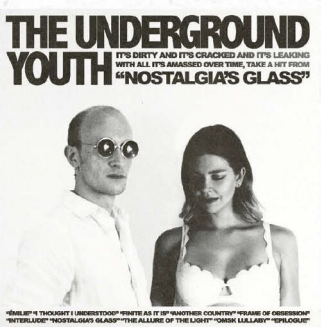


GOLDEN HOURS
"GOLDEN HOURS"
OUT NOW – LP/DL



THROW DOWN BONES
"THREE"
OUT NOW – LP/DL

THE MEN
"FUZZ CLUB SESSION"
OUT NOW – 2LP/DL



THE UNDERGROUND YOUTH
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DAIISTAR
"GOOD TIME"
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Synanthesia in 1969. L-R: Dennis Homes, Leslie Cook, Jim Fraser

Just As The Curtain Finally Falls

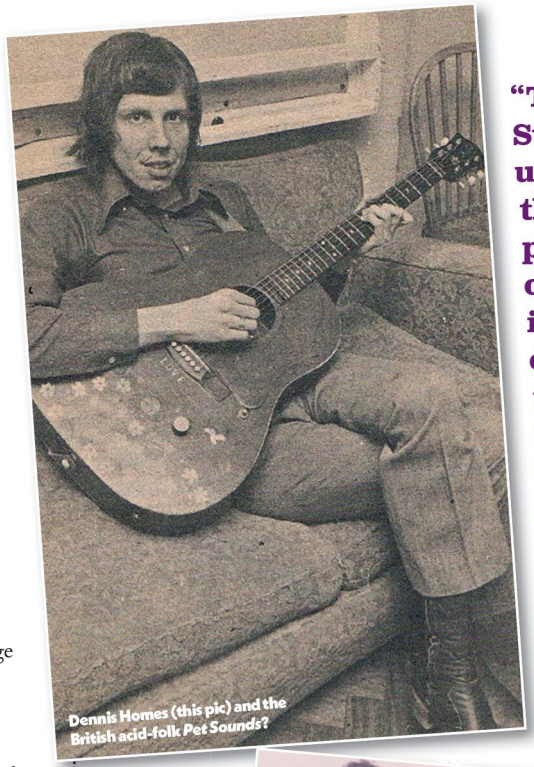
The music made by the young in London in 1968 and '69 sounded like a flower blooming. As the '70s dawned, the full impact of long-haired American singer-songwriters and the aftermath of Woodstock was yet to permeate. The story of **SYNANTHESIA** exemplifies this precise moment; a blink-and-you'll-miss-it major label release typical of this brief period of chance and experimentation.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS follows the journey of an overlooked acid-folk classic

Teenager Dennis Homes started playing in a semi-pro band in 1964, playing in pubs three or four nights a week in and around East and North London. "I played bass guitar and our repertoire was mainly rock 'n' roll," he tells us. "After that I played in a couple of soul bands, but in '67 I started visiting clubs in the West End of London such as Middle Earth and UFO where a whole load of new psychedelic music was emerging. At the same time, I was also going to modern folk clubs such as Les Cousins where a whole new take on folk music was taking place, with groups such as The Incredible String Band and singer/songwriters such as Bert Jansch. It was the influence of these two diverse musical genres that made me start writing songs in a very different vein."

One band that completely summed up the mindset were the mentioned String Band. "They showed us that just two or three people could play a whole range of different acoustic instruments in one short session, which added lots of musical colour to their set.

"I'd been writing lots of songs on acoustic guitar and after listening to Donovan's double album *A Gift From*



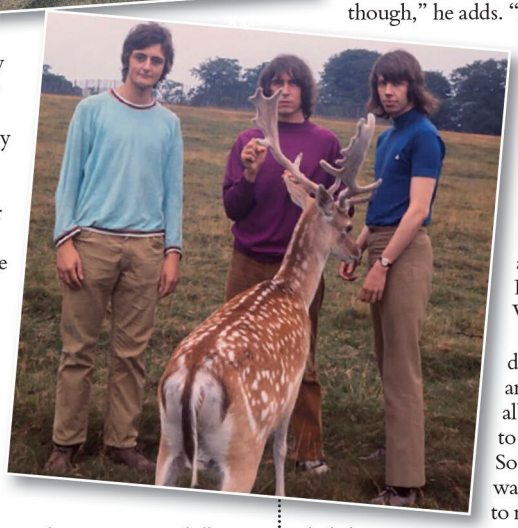
Dennis Homes (this pic) and the British acid-folk *Pet Sounds*?

A Flower To A Garden. I really loved the way Harold McNair's jazzy flute blended so well with Donovan's songs. My songs were nothing like Donovan's, but I thought that a jazzy flute would really enhance them. This gave me the idea of forming an acoustic trio of two acoustic guitars and a flute, so I placed an advert in *Melody Maker* for an acoustic guitarist and a flautist. It was through this advert that I found Les Cook and Jim Fraser. Les was very much folk-orientated and also played mandolin, violin and bongos. Jim had previously played in jazz outfits in the North of England and played alto sax, soprano sax, oboe. As well as playing the usual concert flute he also played alto flute. As I also played the vibraphone, the wide range of instruments opened up a whole load of musical ideas, far more than I had originally anticipated. Les had also written quite a lot of songs, so from the different musical background that each of us had, we started to get a very diverse array of musical influences mixed into our music."

A small room in a community centre in Bethnal Green, East London, was booked for rehearsals. Jim came up with the name Synanthesia after the Cannonball Adderley Sextet song 'Syn-Anthesia' from their '62 live album, *In New York*. It fitted the jazzy music and the changing times. "Lots of our songs were pure fantasy," laughs Dennis. "The Greek God songs I wrote over one weekend. They weren't specifically about these Gods but more about what they stood for and how we could create these moods in music." Heady times. Well, almost – the trio weren't inspired by dope, preferring the honest buzz of a pint of best bitter.

Incredibly, after less than a month practicing a gig was booked. "I managed to get a half-hour spot at a local folk club. It was very much a traditional folk club and I don't think the audience particularly liked us or could really make sense of our act, especially when Jim played a wild jazzy sax solo or played a concert flute while at the same time he stuck a tiny wooden African flute up his nose and played the two together! When we started playing the college circuit we played alongside such acts as King Crimson, Pink Floyd, Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span. We also played at some great clubs such as The Marquee in London and Mothers in Birmingham."

After a busy few months, cutting an acetate seemed like the next option. Dennis funded a session at Regent Sound. "The Ellis Wright Agency, which later became Chrysalis, was a fairly new agency that were making quite a headway in booking acts on the university circuit. I sent the acetate along to Terry Ellis, who invited me along to their office for a chat. He quite liked the music, but I had no more dealings with him personally; it was one of his bookers, Doug Darcy, who started getting us work." Sandy Roberton – who ran September Productions, working with such classy progressive folkies as Shelagh McDonald, Keith Christmas, PC Kent, Robin Scott and Al Jones – was introduced to the trio by Darcy and promptly signed them.



They entered Sound Techniques, Chelsea in February '69 to start work on an album. Only wanting to record self-penned material that they could play live, there were no overdubs. "Sandy Roberton allowed us a fairly free rein in the recording studio, just giving us hints, but not in any dictatorial way," Dennis says. "He was in contact with a number of record labels. At the time of the recording, we didn't know what label it would be released on, but in the end he struck a deal with RCA, who released quite a few of his productions including The Liverpool Scene, Keith Christmas and Steeleye Span."

"The Incredible String Band showed us that just two or three people could play a whole range of different acoustic instruments in one short session, which added lots of musical colour to their set"

The whole session was completed in two days flat with a further day mixing. The band had barely been together six months, and Dennis felt the album was rushed. Inevitably, he was somewhat disappointed. Released in September '69, it did receive a few decent reviews. "It didn't sell that well, though," he adds. "Pirate radio had just finished and the only major radio station for modern music was Radio 1 which was very 'pop'. The only deejays to play anything from our album were John Peel and Tommy Vance."

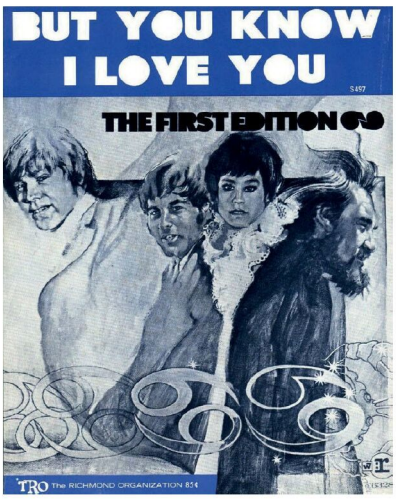
As Roberton didn't think anything from the album was suitable to release as a single, Sound Techniques was booked again to record the ever so slightly more commercial new song 'Shifting Sands'. With a string arrangement from David Palmer (later to join Jethro Tull) the whole recording was most effective, building on the album in its late in the day blend of psychedelia and folk, with added orchestration. Alas, though, it was not to be. "Les Cook started a course in journalism but found studying at college and playing gigs was too much, so he left and the band split," concludes Dennis.

'Shifting Sands' later ended up on RCA's *49 Greek Street* compilation in July '70, which featured bands that had played Les Cousins. Prior to that, Dennis and Jim had gone electric and got heavy, but it was never meant to be and proved short-lived, marking the end of the youthful and imaginative trio. S!

Synanthesia is out now on Guerssen

Love without conditions. The First Edition in 1968. L-R: Kenny Rogers, Thelma Camacho, Terry Williams, Mike Settle

This Travelling Life

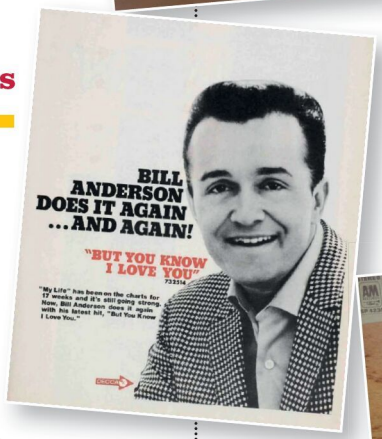


In need of a hit, Mike Settle of US country-psych oddballs The First Edition conjured up '**BUT YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU**'. It not only returned the group to the charts but reshaped their style and unwittingly encouraged a canon of cover versions spanning country, soul and MOR.

ANDY MORTEN follows the dream

When The First Edition began recording their third album in late 1968, the group – a rag-tag aggregation of disenfranchised New Christy Minstrels and former Bob Dylan drummer Mickey Jones – were trying desperately to repeat the success of 'Just Dropped In (To See What Condition My Condition Was In)', the kitsch, pseudo-psychedelic Mickey Newbury song that had soared to #5 on *Billboard* earlier in the year. 'Condition' has since become a staple of the era, appearing in numerous movies and being covered by artists as diverse as Betty LaVette and Supergrass, but in the interim, two albums and three singles that competently blended harmony-pop and Texan country into an unidentifiable, unmarketable whole had failed to click with the public. "We're still finding our own identity," luxuriously hirsute, earringed singer/bassist Kenny Rogers told *Beat*

"There's the folksy side of us, and the country style, but then there is also a need for a much harder rock sound"
Kenny Rogers



Instrumental in March '70. "There's the folksy side of us, and the country style, but then there is also a need for a much harder rock sound."

Rogers shared vocal duties in the Edition with fellow former Minstrels Mike Settle and Thelma Camacho. Right from the off, it was Settle who brought songs to the table, yet their folky, commercial potential was overlooked as singles were farmed out to established songwriting units… and flopped. Determined to assert creative control over the group's sound, and armed with a clutch of new Settle songs, The First Edition embraced 'But You Know I Love You' with open arms.

Written in the first person, the song's protagonist rues the end of a relationship brought about by the demands and distances of life on the road and the need to keep the dollars coming in. "If only I could find my way back to the time / When the problems of this life had not yet crossed my mind."

And the answers could be found in children's nursery rhymes," he writes, before conceding, "But you know we can't live on dreams alone / Got to pay the rent, so I must leave you all alone." For a man who'd spent the first seven years of the decade as a jobbing folk musician, Settle's words of nostalgic regret were only too real.

Recorded in a bouncy, semi-acoustic folk-rock style with horns arranged by former Cricket Glen D Hardin and future Grammy/Emmy-winning producer Mike Post, and a warm, commercial sheen courtesy of Sinatra's producer of choice Jimmy Bowen, 'But You Know I Love You' was released on Reprise four days before Christmas '68. It entered the *Billboard* Hot 100 in January and by March had peaked at #19, its exposure boosted by an 8th December appearance on *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* but stymied by lack of regional airplay in many states. Accompanying album *'69* would out-sell its predecessor and scrape into the Top 200, before its closing track 'Ruby, Don't Take Your Love To Town' catapulted the group (suddenly rebranded Kenny Rogers & The First Edition) into Top 10s around the world and set Rogers on the road to Country Hall Of Fame immortality.

'But You Know I Love You''s afterlife began almost immediately, with country crooners, soulful balladeers and easy listening interpreters queuing up to adopt it as their own. Teresa Bennett, sometime member of The Anita Kerr Singers, tackled it on May '69's Dot Records showcase *Anita Kerr Presents Teresa*, but the following month country superstar 'Whispering' Bill Anderson released an up-tempo bluegrass version that leapt to #2 on *Billboard*'s Hot Country chart. Waylon Jennings & The Kimberlys sealed the song's country credentials on their self-titled album in July, with Buck Owens & The Buckaroos closing out September's *Tall Dark Stranger* with a similarly reverential reading. By the end of the year, Wynn Stewart, Ray Stevens and Jack Greene had released country-pop versions, with Skeeter Davis, Jeanne Ewing, Stan Hitchcock and "newgrass" pioneers The Bluegrass Alliance offering variations on the country theme in '70.

Many of the most worthy and enduring renditions of 'But You Know I Love You' emerged from outside the worlds of country and MOR, with notable soul performers tuning into the heartache at the centre of the song. New York vocal quartet The Sweet Inspirations chose to open July '69's pop covers album *Sweets For My Sweet* with a suitably slinky take, the forgotten pairing of Johnny Nash and Kim Weston included it on their superb self-titled '69 album, and gospel goddess Laura Lee tucked away a suitably sublime reading on a '70 B-side and '72's *Love More Than Pride* album. Storied southern soul siren Barbara Lewis took the song into deep dancefloor territory on her exemplary Stax album *The Many Grooves Of Barbara Lewis*.

Even in the midst of these myriad genre-bending recordings, many listeners remain most familiar with the song from Evie Sands' '69 reading. By turns sultry and defiant, it's a highlight of Sands' *Any Way That You Want Me* – an album full to bursting with sophisticated country-soul gems. Sands tells *Shindig!* that the song was chosen based on her love of The First Edition's original.

After leaving The First Edition, Settle cut an understated version of the song for his self-titled '71 outing. Kenny Rogers was the last man standing as The First Edition ground to a halt in '76, whereupon he embarked on a hugely successful solo career. His fourth solo collection *Ten Years Of Gold* features 'But You Know I Love You', one of five First Edition singles that had to be re-recorded due to licensing issues. Hearing him revisit the song in those trademark husky tones 10 years later proves he was always destined for mass appeal.

Dolly Parton recognised the song's "life on the road" message and co-opted it for the '80 movie spin-off album *9 To 5 And Odd Jobs*. Three years later, she and Rogers would conquer the world with the triple-platinum duet 'Islands In The Stream'. Rogers rarely performed 'But You Know I Love You' in concert, even as the gauche delights of 'Condition' and 'Ruby' kept calling him back. Perhaps the song's moral of "money can't buy you happiness" wasn't true after all. S!

Sarolta Zalatnay, the Hungarian pop sensation who found herself working with Dave Mason and Jackie Edwards at Island in 1968

A Taste Of Pink

ISLAND RECORDS made its mark spreading the gospel of Jamaican music in the UK before signing home-grown acts like The Spencer Davis Group and Wynder K Frog. In 1967 it launched the beloved WIP series (the P standing either for pink or progressive, depending on who you ask), which saw a new vanguard of rock acts including Traffic, Nirvana, Spooky Tooth, Free, Jethro Tull and much of Joe Boyd's Witchseason roster achieve both commercial and critical success. Two of this issue's stars – Cat Stevens and Nick Drake – would find their homes at Island.

Meanwhile, tucked away on B-sides and forgotten one-shots, Island offered more than its fair share of tantalising rock and pop oddities, from which we've selected 10 of our favourites

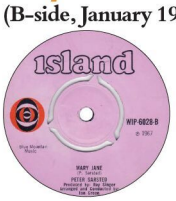
THE FREAKS OF NATURE
People! Let's Freak Out
(A-side, December 1966)

Okay, let's kick off with a selection whose complex provenance almost outweighs its retrospective acclaim. With Van Morrison having departed for solo fame and fortune, the rest of Them became Belfast Gipsies/Gypsies, fell in with LA huckster Kim Fowley and cut a pile of tracks that would leak out on singles and EPs on various labels under a variety of names during late 1966 and early '67. 'People! Let's Freak Out' is the exact same track as 'Secret Police', the flip of October '66 Island single 'Gloria's Dream' (itself a shameless rewrite of 'Gloria'). Reissued two months later under the Freaks pseudonym, it's a typically snotty slice of Bo Diddley-indebted UK garage-rock that also ended up closing Belfast Gypsies' Swedish-only LP. Freakish indeed!

THE V.I.P.S
Straight Down To The Bottom
(A-side, May 1967)

Hard-working Carlisle R&B combo The V.I.P.s had already existed in several iterations by the time this bouncy, percussive pop/soul tune, written and produced by Jimmy Miller (one of his first for the label's UK operation) became their second single for Island. When pianist Keith Emerson left to form The Nice in early 1967, the remaining quartet of Mike Harrison, Luther Grosvenor, Greg Ridley and Mike Kellie regrouped as Art, finessing the promise of 'Straight Down'. Their proto-prog version of Buffalo Springfield's 'For What It's Worth' followed in July, with the *Supernatural Fairy Tales* album and a further name change to Spooky Tooth in place by the end of the year.

PETER SARSTED
Mary Jane
(B-side, January 1968)



Yes, *that* Peter Sarstedt. The moustachioed MOR merchant made a lone 45 for Island credited, possibly erroneously, as Peter Sarsted. A-side 'I Must Go On' is passable mid-tempo orchestral pop. The barking mad self-penned B-side 'Mary Jane' is another story, finding our hero gamely trying to gate-crash the high psychedelic era with what's either a pro- or anti-weed song (or possibly both). With jarring whipcrack sound effects and what sounds like a drunken orchestra playing a Lew Grade TV show theme in a different key and tempo (possibly also a different

"The barking mad self-penned B-side 'Mary Jane' is another story, finding our hero gamely trying to gate-crash the high psychedelic era with what's either a pro- or anti-weed song (or possibly both)"

dimension), Sarstedt cheerily intones, "It's a real good time that you'll get from Mary Jane / She'll make your body writhe and twist with pain." It descends into echo chamber free-jazz chaos at the end. Genuinely baffling.

KYTES
Running In The Water
(A-side, February 1968)

Originally known as The Cyclones, this Bristolian outfit led by guitarist and singer Eddie King became the backing band for Peter & Gordon in 1963, before rebranding as The Kytes and recording a brace of singles for Pye and backing Olivia Newton-John on her '66 gem 'Till You Say You'll Be Mine'. The Kytes' final outing 'Running In The Water' was released on Island and features characteristically '68 reverse tape effects, tight harmonies and Hammond organ courtesy of Pete Robinson. Robinson went onto session work with Shawn Phillips, Eric Clapton and Phil Collins, as well as making the successful transition into soundtracks, composing for films such as *Cocktail* and *Wayne's World*. Despite appearing on the *Rubble* and *We Can Fly* series, little was known about The Kytes until an interview with King flew in on the superb Left And To The Back blog a decade ago.

THE SMOKE
Sydney Gill
(B-side, March 1968, release cancelled)

Things were looking good for displaced York quartet The Smoke when they were taken under Island head honcho's Chris Blackwell's wing in late 1967. Their first single for Island (the excellent pairing of 'It Could Be Wonderful' and 'Have Some More Tea') bombed and they remained in Germany, where the success of 'My Friend Jack' enabled them to work, but returned to London to cut a handful of tracks for Island, including this story of Sydney Gill and "his fanciful dream machine". Attempted in two vastly different styles, the backwards piano-driven version saw the light of the day as a German A-side in May '68, while its scheduled March UK release (as the flipside of a cover of Traffic's 'Utterly Simple') was cancelled when the group promptly split after being ordered to return to London by their recording manager Monty Babson. Both versions have since appeared on numerous Smoke anthologies.

SAROLTA
Open Your Hands
(A-side, May 1968)

Sarolta Zalatnay remains best-remembered for the funky, deejay-baiting albums she recorded for the Pepita label in the early '70s, by which time the Hungarian singer already boasted a string of native hit singles stretching back to 1964. Briefly relocating to London in '68, she found herself adopted by the Island family (and courted by Maurice Gibb) for this superb coupling written by Jackie Edwards and produced by Dave Mason, in between his first two stints in Traffic. Flipside 'L.O.V.E.' is up-tempo singalong soul but it's the brass and strings-heavy 'Open Your Hands' – pitched somewhere between Sandie Shaw's bubblegum-pop and The Four Tops' recent hits – that suggests Sarolta's English-language career was stymied too soon.

FAIRPORT CONVENTION
Throwaway Street Puzzle
(B-side, November 1968)

A punchy outlier from the *What We Did On Our Holidays* sessions, 'Throwaway Street Puzzle' (penned by Richard Thompson and Ashley Hutchings) is fairly unique in Fairport's catalogue. Tucked away on the flip of 'Meet On The Ledge', it's rockier even than the shuffling blooze of 'Mr Lacey', an oblique, faintly electric Dylan-ish rocker with a fidgety riff, and chaotic congas topped with Sandy Denny and Iain Matthews' howling shared lead vocal. "Throwaway" its lyrics may be, but it's perhaps the closest the Fairports came to the feral Brit roots-rock of 1968. Midway through, Thompson unleashes a needling solo that's pure aggravation, repeating the same vicious run over and over like an attacking hornet. All good, nasty fun.

HEAVY JELLY
I Keep Singing That Same Old Song
(A-side, January 1969)

Following threats from manager Don Arden's heavies in late 1968, Skip Bifferty singer Graham Bell told the music press that the band couldn't carry on. However, work had already begun with maverick producer Guy Stevens on their next single, the powerful and soulful 'I Keep Singing That Same Old Song'. This fine Colin Gibson number, sounding somewhat like Spooky Tooth, led some to believe that the bizarrely monikered Heavy Jelly – a name coined by a *Time Out* journo who penned a spoof review of a fictitious psychedelic band of that name – was the Tooth in disguise. The driving piano motif, bombastic vocals and Motown beat are the perfect marriage on this wild, sprawling and muddy sounding closing effort. At 7:49 it's even longer than Richard Harris' 'MacArthur Park'. Heavy!

HARD MEAT
Rain
(A-side, August 1969)

Under the guidance of producer Sandy Roberton, this Brummie trio – Dolan brothers Mick (guitar, vocals) and Steve (bass, vocals), and drummer Mick Carless – found their way to Chris Blackwell in 1969, recording a solitary single with a tremolo-soaked version of John Lennon's nod to the English's favourite subject. Seemingly deemed too tough to chew, after a planned LP was shelved the band was set adrift from Island, finding their way to Warner Brothers where they released two albums before disbanding. Alongside those recordings, the Island sessions were finally issued as *The Unreleased Album* by Cherry Red imprint Esoteric in 2022.

MARK ALLAIN
Be Mine
(A-side, January 1973)

Perhaps the most mysterious of Island's home-grown releases was this one-shot By Mark Allain, part of the label's January/February 1973 university package tour that also featured Canterbury-adjacent prog band Twenty-Five Views Of Worthing (whose Island sessions were finally released in 2020) and Raymond Tissier. Alas, this single was the only release by the three signings. It's a slick slice of yacht-rock produced by Island publicist Garrell Redfern (by all accounts the last Island employee to speak to Nick Drake) that comes on like a West Coast bossa pastiche, with rolling bongos and goodtime piano, while Allain's vocals are overpowered by an overenthusiastic saxophone run. S!

Contributors: Seán Casey, Rhys Jones, Jon 'Mojo' Mills, Andy Morten, Martin Ruddock

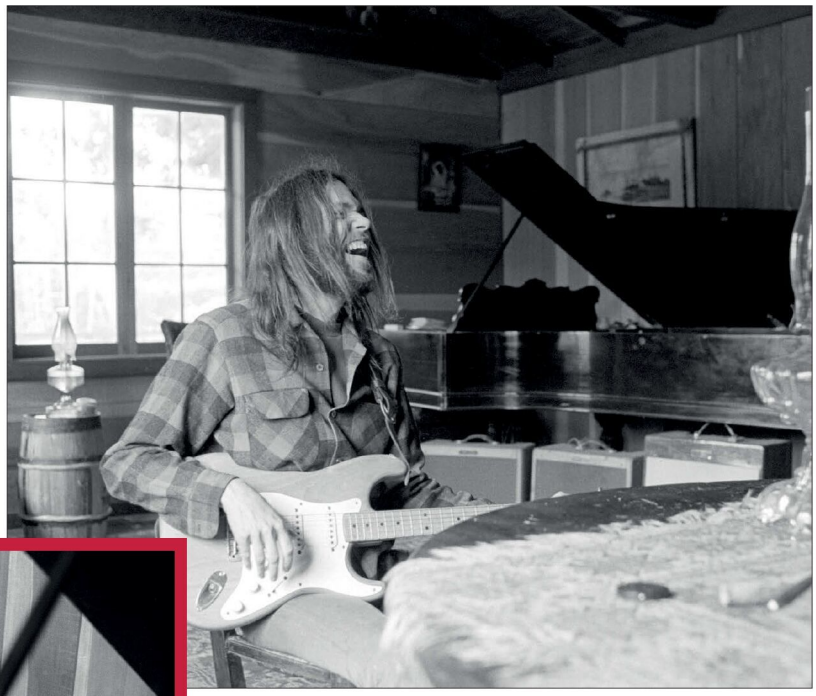
Bows And Arrows

In May 1971 photographer Henry Diltz and his friend Gary Burton paid one of their regular visits to **NEIL YOUNG**'s Broken Arrow ranch in Half Moon Bay, California.

The resulting photographs – preserved in a new anthology of Diltz's images of Young and fellow travellers CSN – capture the artist, his brother Bob, and Gary hanging out, listening to Neil play, and checking out his recent films: candid, natural, and relaxed

HENRY DILTZ: It was an adventure that unfolded and I was there to notice what was happening. And when it looked good, frame it and take a picture of it. Gary was really very good friends with Neil. I knew Neil as a fellow musician; I was in that club, so there was that automatic feeling of trust and brotherhood. But Gary knew him more as an artist.

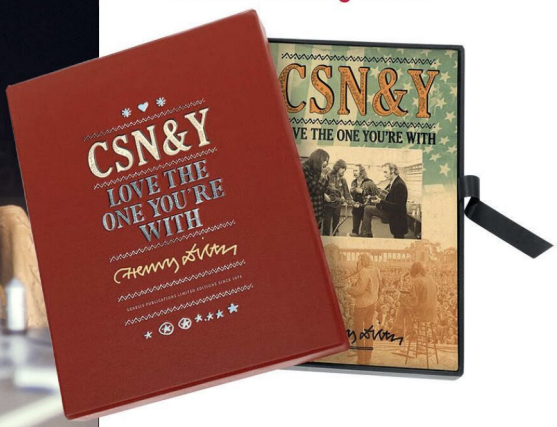
We'd get up in the morning, drink some coffee and go out for a walk. We'd visit the emu and the llama. Of course, I knew the walk was for me to take pictures.



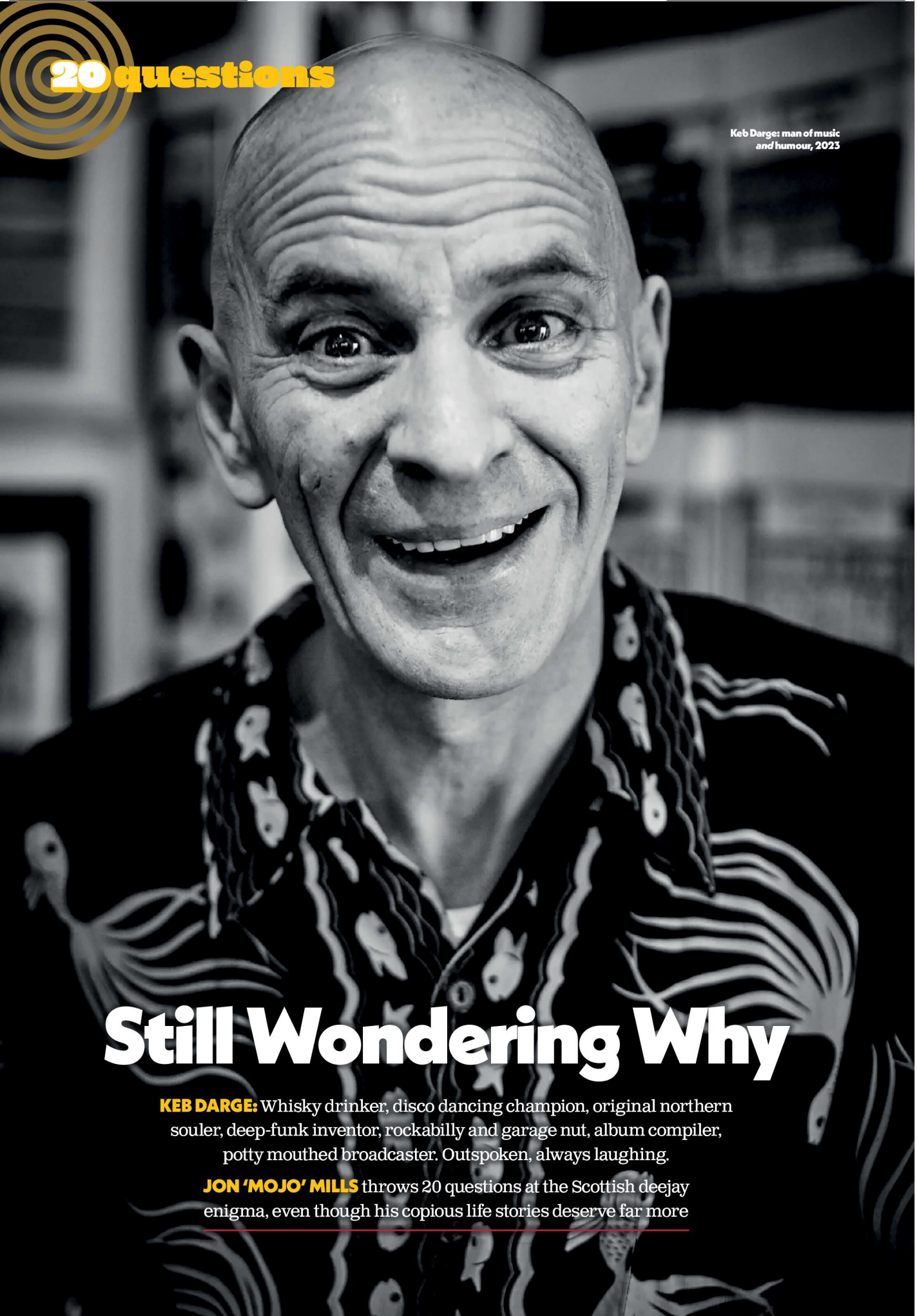
NEIL YOUNG: I like where I live because it's away from everything, yet it's still close enough so I can fly around the country and do what I have to do and what I want to do. And I love the natural things, the redwood trees and everything.

I love it out here. I have to stay away. There's something inside me that makes me not want to get involved, that makes me want to stay removed from everything, except for the people that I really love and that are very close to me – my family and close friends.

Extracted from CSN&Y: Love The One You're With by Henry Diltz. Published by Genesis Publications in August 2023



20 questions



Keb Darge: man of music *and* humour, 2023

Still Wondering Why

KEB DARGE: Whisky drinker, disco dancing champion, original northern souler, deep-funk inventor, rockabilly and garage nut, album compiler, potty mouthed broadcaster. Outspoken, always laughing.

JON 'MOJO' MILLS throws 20 questions at the Scottish deejay enigma, even though his copious life stories deserve far more

Shindig!: You grew up in Dufftown in the northeast of Scotland. What music did you listen to as a child?

Keb Darge: Our house in Craigellachie was opposite the village hall, and on weekends I would be pulled to my bedroom window by the rumble of motorcycles and the pounding beat emitting from its walls. We had a population of around 200, but it seemed like twice that number were congregating across the road, and all of them were teenagers. I would sing along to the tunes I knew, 'Love Me Do' being a playground favourite at the time, and I would dream of being old enough to be allowed to join the excitement. Unbeknownst to me at the time, a lot of Italian prisoners of war who had been incarcerated in the region, upon being released, decided to build their future in Scotland. Most opened fish 'n' chip shops or ice cream van businesses, but one gentleman by the name of Albert Bonici opened The Park Cafe, then the Two Red Shoes ballroom in the far-off city of Elgin. I have no idea where he got his money from, but I do know he was connected with Brian Epstein and various London promoters.

By a stroke of luck which involved The Beatles' van full of equipment arriving at Edinburgh to meet them, whilst their flight from Hamburg was rerouted to Aberdeen because of snowstorms, Bonici's Two Red Shoes became the first venue they performed at on their first ever proper UK tour, as the originally planned opening concert in Leith had to be cancelled. This was January 1963; the band were paid a staggering £42 for their set, but poor old Albert still lost money as he was not allowed to sell alcohol, and most of the revellers did their drinking in a nearby hotel before The Fab Four went on.

However, Craigellachie village hall was far out of reach of the clutching hands of Elgin City council officials, and we only had one bobby, whose life was consumed with catching poachers. He would be in his bed at the other side of the Craig when the Luftwaffe-like throng of motorcycles, cars, vans, and indeed tractors arrived. Therefore, Bonici put on what could possibly have been the country's first illegal rave in this desolate retreat. The Stones, Who, Small Faces all came pounding out of that hall. I knew nothing of records and marvelled at how so many bands could play in that tiny hall on just one night. At school, though, it was The Beatles who ruled. You would be considered weird if you did not know the words to their songs, and later even weirder if you did not own a plastic Beatle wig.

S!: How did you get into dancing?

KD: Through the taekwondo, which I started training in in 1973, I had a form of pass to get me onto the local RAF bases. Two English RAF mates from Taekwondo, Pete and Mick, would often invite me and a couple of others along to join in their boxing sessions at RAF Lossiemouth. One evening, in the winter of '74, I was invited to an RAF Christmas disco. Mmm... I thought, they've got WAFs there, and maybe English girls are more forthcoming with sexual favours than the local female population appeared to be. I was a virgin at the time. I donned my best bright purple butterfly-collared shirt, some Hai Karate, checked in the mirror to see how well I had perfected the Bruce Lee look, and off I set.

I arrived early and took up a position at a table in a corner of the room to study the soon to arrive parade of foreign beauties and sup my manly pint. I didn't really like beer, I still don't, but it was the thing to do then for a soon to be 17-year-old. The room steadily filled up, until eventually it

A young Keb at Wigan, top off and honing his moves

"I enquired of Pete, 'What the fuck was that?' 'It's called northern soul' came the reply. I carried on, 'No, not the music, the dancing?' 'Yeah, it's northern soul dancing, that's how they dance to northern soul records down south'"

The austere looking den of dance that was The Wigan Casino

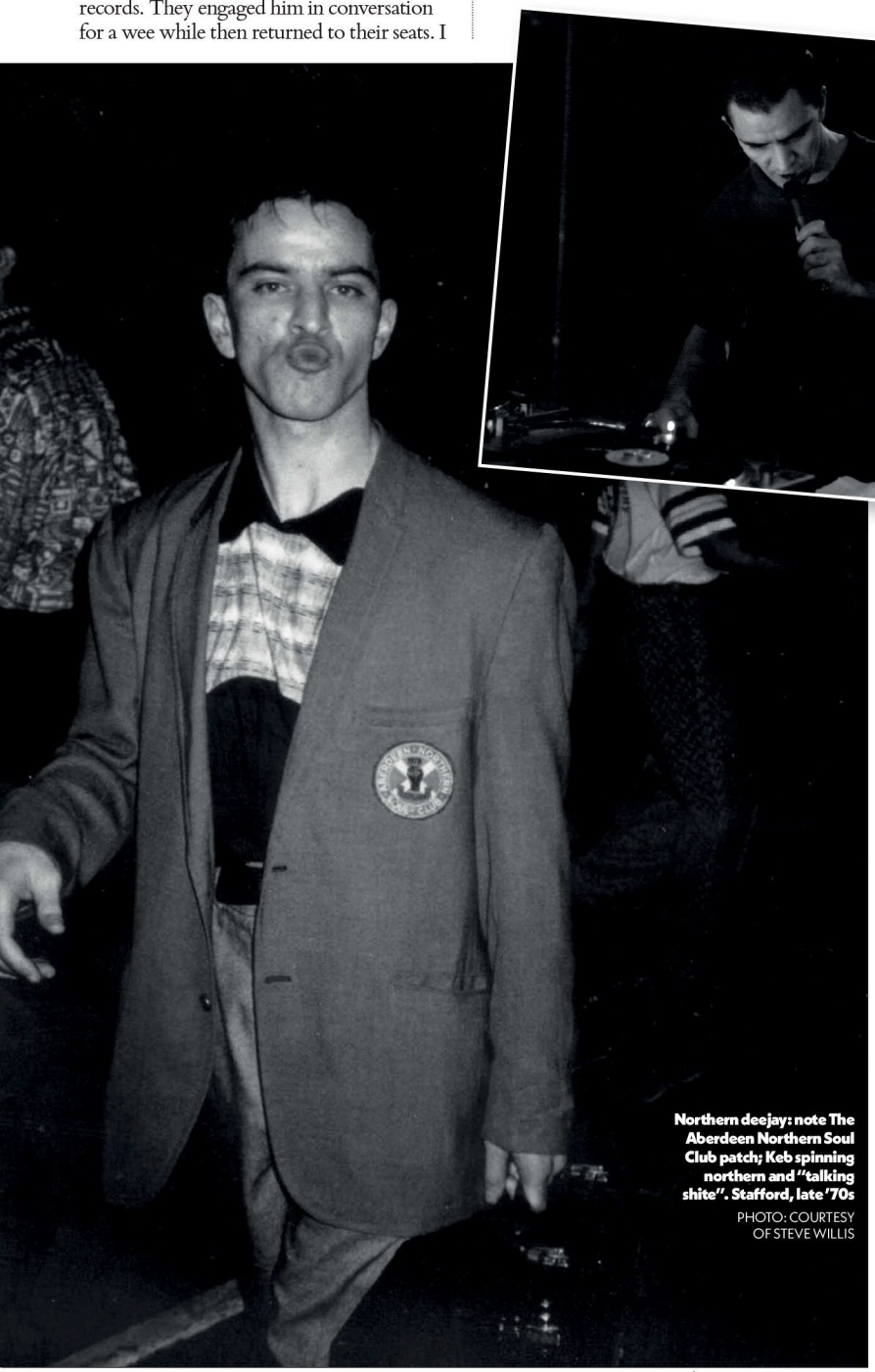
PHOTO: FRANK ORRELL

was a heaving throng of around 40 boys and five quite plain-looking girls. More than a tad disappointing, but Pete had joined me by now and I didn't want to spoil his evening by acting all defeatist. Our conversation would have been about the local Elgin girls, or the upcoming Scottish taekwondo championships and who we thought Jim would pick as his team. I don't really recall as most of my concentration was on perusing the small huddle of girls now dancing to the latest hits.

The Rubettes, Gary Glitter, Bachman-Turner Overdrive and the like had them going a lot less than wild. Whilst surveying my possible prey I observed three uber trendily dressed boys approach the disc jockey and hand him a small bundle of seven-inch records. They engaged him in conversation for a wee while then returned to their seats. I was impressed with how cool they looked in their up-to-the-minute fashions but decided I would never see such things in the shops of the backwater birth had assigned me to.

The unenthusiastic dancing went on in front of us to surefire dancefloor fillers of the day like Mud or Showaddywaddy. Then about 10 minutes after their first visit, the three cool boys were up at the decks again chatting to the deejay, this time with irritated faces. Five minutes after that the music suddenly changed and the three boys sprang to their feet. This strange new music belting out of the speakers sounded a lot like the old mod stuff my sister had listened to almost a decade before, but it seemed much faster and harder. The three boys now had the attention of everybody in the room, including the by now seven or eight girls. They seemed to be gliding back and forth across the floor without moving their legs. Then as a drum roll came in the tune, one of them suddenly launched into the kind of hundred-mile-an-hour spin I had only ever seen ice skaters do on the telly. Next thing all three were flat on the floor performing some weird acrobatics with their legs flicking in all directions underneath them; then up they popped and all three launched into these spin things before returning to the fancy floating movement.

"Fuck me," I thought, "if I can dance like that I'm bound to get a shag." With my jaw still hovering close to the table top I enquired of Pete, "What the fuck was that?" "It's called northern soul" came the reply. I carried on, "No, not the music, the dancing?" "Yeah, it's northern soul dancing, that's how they dance to northern soul records down south." I was too shy to approach the boys in question, so I carried on my enquiries with Pete. He informed me that Micky Thompson knew more, and that in fact Micky was a northern soul boy himself.



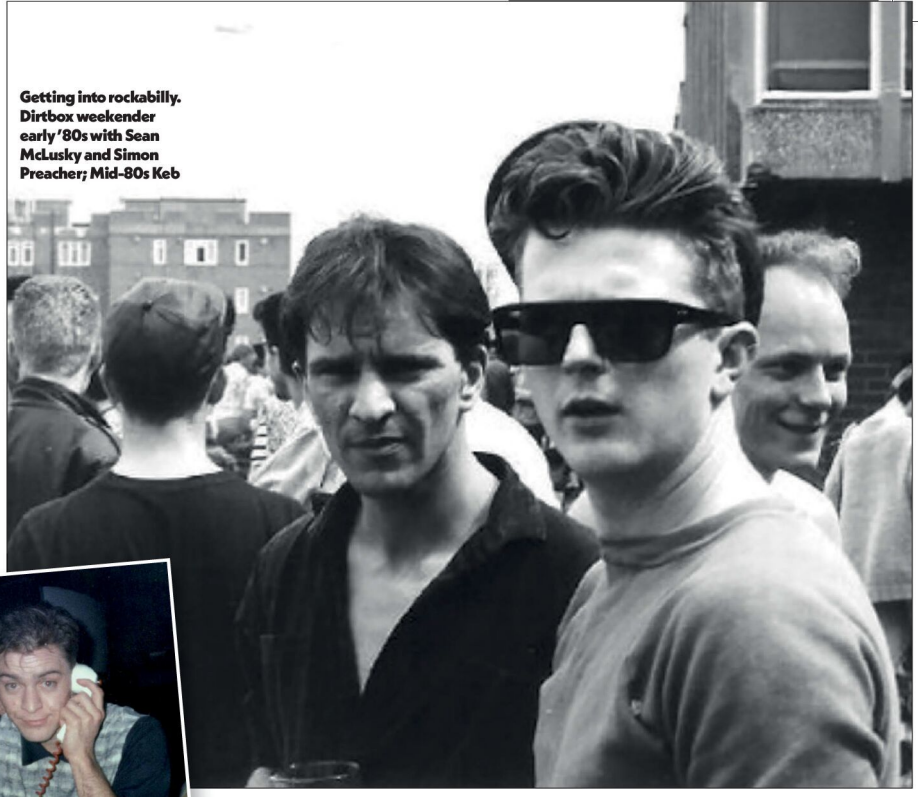
Northern deejay: note The Aberdeen Northern Soul Club patch; Keb spinning northern and "talking shite". Stafford, late '70s

PHOTO: COURTESY OF STEVE WILLIS

S!: What was your entry point into a "proper" northern soul allnighter?

KD: My first visit to The Wigan Casino itself looked like one great big red brick factory to me. Only the big white canopy with the words "Casino Club" stretching the length of its front gave you a clue there was a nightclub inside. The bingo hall just past it looked more inviting, at least that building had some shape to it. There were quite a few youngsters like us milling around when we arrived, which made things seem more promising. We sat on a low wall opposite the entrance at around midnight and watched the comings and comings. They just kept coming, cars and minibuses pulling into the car parks to our rear and to the left of the building. Hired coaches from all parts of the country were arriving in front of us and off-loading hordes of trendy young things. I recognised the deejay from Dundee with the scar on his face getting out of one minibus and felt a slight sense of relief that I sort of knew one other person at least.

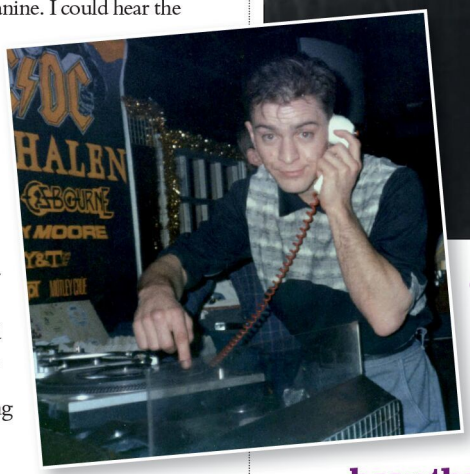
Most of those arriving seemed to be chewing gum, which seemed peculiar, and many carried holdalls sporting little round badges with "Soul this" or "Soul that" written on them. Blazers, short leather jackets, long leather coats and sheepskin jackets seemed popular with quite a few, but there was no real obvious uniform like there had been with the skins or suedeheads. I saw my very first black people, not very many but enough to make me realise I was in a very different world. A queue began forming in front of the door to the furthest left of the building and my brand-new mate Sue, who I'd been chatting to, and I got up to join it. In amongst



Getting into rockabilly. Dirtbox weekender early '80s with Sean McLusky and Simon Preacher; Mid-80s Keb

the queue were a few chaps holding little seven-inch record boxes, some opened and being flicked through. Some would suddenly leave the queue in twos or threes and head round to the side car park. Off for a pee was my initial thought, but in little groups, that was weird.

Eventually the door opened and a couple of bow-tied middle-aged doormen appeared. There was a surge forward and people started filing in one or two at a time. Sue told me to come with her up to the balcony first and I imagined that such a drab looking place must only have a small Elgin cinema-like mezzanine. I could hear the music pulsating from upstairs which sounded promising, but the visuals around me gave me a feeling of "Really, is this what all the fuss is about?" We reached the top of the first flight of stairs to be greeted by an old lady and what looked like her daughter asking for our money. Again, I thought this place can't be all that great, at least they had a pretty young trendy girl taking our money in Dundee. The corridors at The Marryat Hall in Dundee had been immaculate, but the stairwell I was now in was in dire need of a paint job and rather tight. Nonetheless I followed Sue up a few more flights of stairs until we reached what I was now convinced would be my final disappointment.



We entered and my initial impression was "Bugger me, how did they fit such an awesome vision into such a shitty building?" In front of me was a huge pre-war ballroom with a giant curved ceiling. Two deep undulating balconies ornately sculptured on their fronts stretched the full length of either side. I couldn't see the front of the back balcony as we were standing on it, but it was deep and wide. We were a good two stories up, and in the distance on the ground floor opposite where we stood was a shoulder-high stage stretching the breadth of the hall. To our right on the stage stood the deejay choosing the tunes and mumbling incoherently in a thick Lancashire accent, which I thought was very exotic. I then took in the sights and sounds of the quickly filling dancefloor. The sights included the stage filling up with holdalls and the odd cassette recorder, the tables around the sides under the balconies filling up too with bottles of coke or plastic cups of tea on top, and holdalls underneath. The majority of the dancers were just doing the basic step, but suddenly over on the right or left edges of the floor some lads and a few lassies would launch into bursts of intricate acrobatics and fast spins.

"I got fed up with the silly rules that eventually crept into the northern scene in the mid-80s. I then moved to the rockabilly scene and found similar rules. I just wanted people to hear the best records I could find and get the same excitement I got when I first heard them"

S!: What grabbed you about this the most?
KD: The sound that gripped me, other than the tunes, was the clapping. Not the kind of disjointed clapping you would give after a medal was handed out at the taekwondo, though that did happen after every record finished, to be followed by more unintelligible mutterings from the deejay. There were build-up rhythmic claps from the crowd that accompanied the opening bars of some of the tunes, but the one that made me tingle was the sudden sharp crash as a thousand hands whipped together at exactly the same millisecond sporadically throughout the night. I say sporadically, but every time in some strange way you could feel that that was exactly the right millisecond to do this. I sat down draped over the balcony for a good hour, filled with awe as I took it all in. It was love at first sight and I didn't want to miss any of this new beauty before me. I therefore instantly became a regular, hitching down virtually every weekend.

S!: How did you fall into deejaying?
KD: I moved to Aberdeen in 1975 and brought with me the records I had been buying on my trips to the Casino. There were two main discos in the town at the time, Ruffles and The Palace. The deejays at Ruffles refused to play any records I handed them as they wanted to stick to known hits. The same was true of The Palace deejays, except on a Thursday night where a chap called Jonathon Scott took to the decks. His real name was John Snelling and he shared my interest in soul music, though he was more of a People's Choice/Kool & The Gang/Barry White lover. He did however agree to play a few of my northern tunes for me to dazzle the girls to, and he had heard of the northern scene.

As the months went on my little pile of records grew larger and larger, as did my circle of friends. I was going to The Wigan Casino, The Blackpool Mecca and soul nights at The Angus Hotel in Dundee and was regularly asking the record bars "Have you got this?" when a tune I liked came on. I knew nothing of bootlegs or repros and I'm sure that is all I was buying, as I never paid more than a pound each. I also began to get into dancing to and buying this new disco stuff that was slowly replacing the pop hits in the night clubs. Tavares' 'It Only Takes A Minute', Harold Melvin's 'Bad Luck', Brass Construction's 'Movin'' and The Miracles' 'Love Machine' became firm favourites for my shuffling feet and home record player.

The Aberdeen Soul Club was born, this

name soon changed to The Centre City Soul Club when Fat Larry's Band provided the inspiration with a hugely popular new release. Our base was The Royal Hotel every Sunday night, and we attracted no more than 50 people at the start. Jonathon convinced me that I would have to deejay as he did not know the majority of the tunes I was now handing to him, and would not be playing them in any flowing order. I agreed as long as he played my favourites for me to have a dance to, and my deejay career was born. There were no mixers then, so it was just a case of putting the records on and yapping on the microphone in the gaps between tunes. I enjoyed the feeling of getting new people into northern through my records, but nothing more in those early days.

S!: So what about disco?
KD: Nineteen-Seventy-Six arrived, and with it an explosion in this disco stuff. A wee gang had formed of us people into disco *and* northern soul, and we were growing every week. The early ringleaders were Jonathon, Angie Gordon, Carol Spence, Phil Rae, Dave Manson and myself. Dave had already left us to move to London for a job as an airline steward in '75, which was a very rare and fancy job then, but new replacements were coming in thick and fast. Normally, as was the case with Billy Davidson and Ian Copeland, we would spot somebody at The Palace dancing enthusiastically to the good stuff and introduce ourselves. The introduction would usually be followed by "We are going to Wigan/Manchester/Blackpool for an all dayer/nighter at the weekend, do you want to join us?", and the answer was always an excited "Yes." Initially most would favour both styles, but soon we had growing numbers who only wanted northern or only wanted funk and disco. Jonathon still had to play the hits for the sheep though, and eventually suggested we start a Sunday night soul club like they had in Dundee, where we could play nothing but tunes we liked.

S!: Across all the genres you're known for playing, your attitude is refreshingly un-snobby, centred on turning people onto good music rather than pleasing aficionados. Would you say that's a key reason you've been able to maintain such a long career? Is there a record that you're proud to have "broken" on any scene?
KD: I got fed up with the silly rules that eventually crept into the northern scene in the mid-80s. I then moved to the rockabilly scene and found similar rules. I just wanted people to hear the best records I could find and get the same excitement I got when I first heard them. I think that worked better than sticking to a scene. Records I broke on a scene. Mmm… I suppose Marsha Gee's 'Peanut Duck' (who isn't actually Marsha Gee, there was no name on the acetate I played as a new discovery) or Tony Galla's 'In Love' on the northern scene, and Charles Ross & His Boys From Paris' 'A Little Bit Lonesome' as a new discovery on the rockabilly scene. I did break loads more, but those three went from "I wonder if this will work" to worldwide recognised tunes quite quickly.

S!: What do you think of the term "deep-funk"? You're considered the grandaddy, but where did your inspiration come from?
KD: It was me that made up the term "deep-funk" to describe the music I was playing at those nights. It seemed to me that all those great records had been missed because of their rarity, and I had built up a mountain of them whilst looking for unknown northern in the States. The inspiration came from me getting divorced and having to sell my northern, but not wanting to stop deejaying.

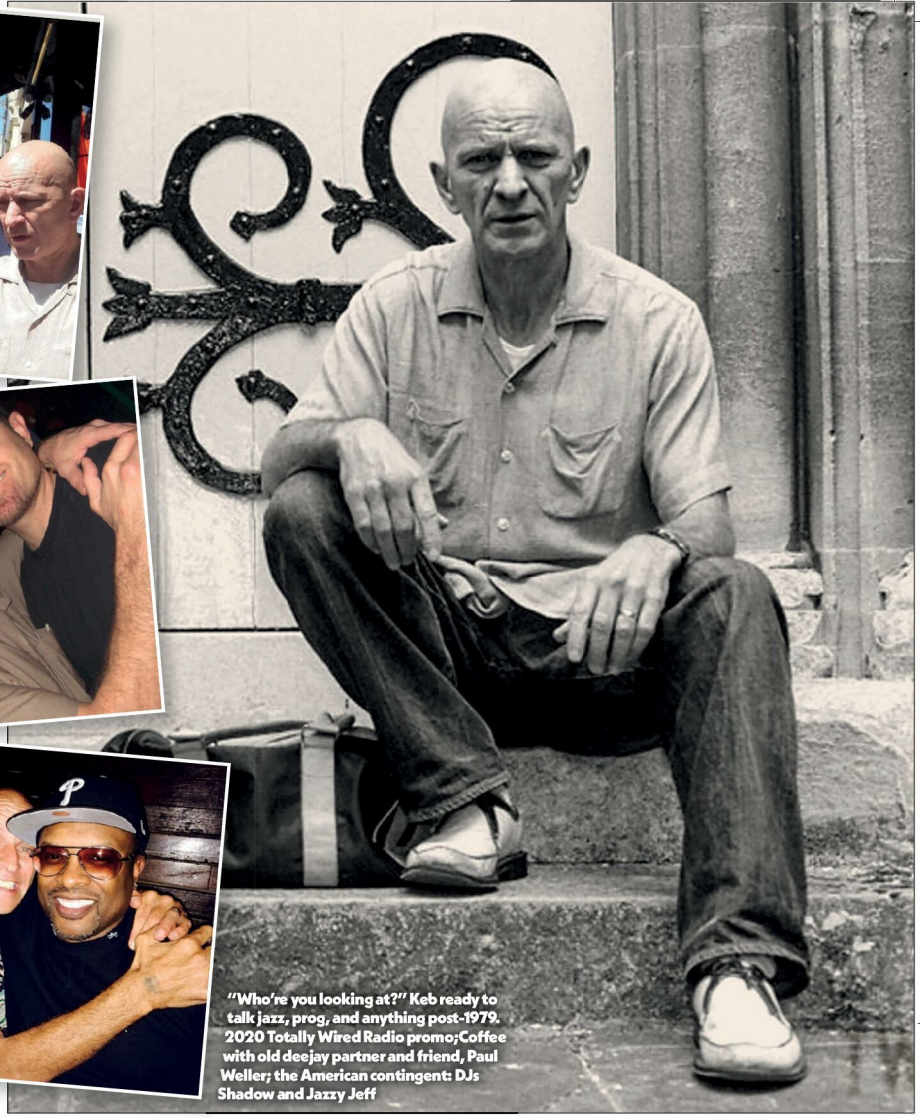
S!: What appealed about Madame Jojo's and setting up the residency there? What do you think of the London club scene now? The Cave, The Deptford Northern Soul Club?
KD: I have always believed that for a club to grow and really break great records to the crowd it needs to be weekly. All the best clubs from my past were weekly and it seemed like the right thing to do, plus Madame Jojo's was such a great venue. And yes, I love to see the young kids at the likes of The Cave Club or The Deptford Northern Soul Club getting into great vintage music.

S!: Have you ever played a set that you thought was 100% perfect? Have you ever played a set that you regretted?
KD: Two weeks ago, in Tokyo, me and Mori from Wacko Maria played a six-hour set that was as near as damn it perfect. I've never regretted any sets, as I've always played what I love at the time.

S!: Has the rise of the internet affected how you unearth unheard musical nuggets?
KD: One hundred per cent. No more trips to the States digging through filthy warehouses. The locals can do that now, then charge me handsomely for any great finds. There weren't many locals interested in the old days.

S!: You've always spoken very highly of Gabe Roth, co-founder of Daptone Records. What, for you, makes him such an important figure? You've also developed friendships with some legendary soul musicians including Isaac Hayes and George Clinton. Why do you think they let you in?
KD: Gabe is a musical genius. He was the man really behind Amy Winehouse, but he sold the credit to feed the band. One of the best producers of real soul music ever. Isaac, George and other stars let me in because I talked to them like normal mates and made them laugh. The music knowledge was just

A room full of rare records, Keb 2021; the 2017 Keb and Cut Chemist garage/psych compilation, *The Dark Side*



"Who're you looking at?" Keb ready to talk jazz, prog, and anything post-1979. 2020 Totally Wired Radio promo; Coffee with old deejay partner and friend, Paul Weller; the American contingent: DJs Shadow and Jazzy Jeff

what started them listening.

S!: You don't strike us as someone who has heroes or would claim to be in awe of anyone. If pushed, who would you say has had the biggest impact on you, musical or otherwise?
KD: Richard Searling at Wigan Casino is who I have copied ever since, no matter the style. Play the best of the stuff, that in the main others can't play, was what I got from him back then. Today I look up to Mark "Butch" Dobson. For me he is the best deejay the northern scene has ever had. He is still turning up new discoveries today and has kept them at a very high standard quality wise. I will make an effort to go hear Butch play if I'm free.

S!: Your Soho Radio and Totally Wired radio shows were always entertaining. When can we expect to hear you again on the airwaves?
KD: Doing a weekly show thing for ROVR live when they start up. Just music though, you won't get the thrill of me talking shite and getting drunk on air.

S!: Is there a genre you won't touch? You like to take the piss out of jazz, for one. Do you just enjoy winding people up?
KD: Naaah... I don't like jazz apart from the big band stuff, the rest seems too far up its own arse for me. I know reggae is good, but I just don't like it myself. Any musical form that came after 31st December 1979 leaves me cold, and metal sounds empty so far.

S!: Tell us your current Desert Island discs or the five records you'd save from a fire?
KD: The Human Expression's 'Calm Me Down', The Savoys' 'Can It Be', The Plagues' 'I've Been Through It Before', Rock Shop's 'Is That Your Halo?', The Omens' 'Searching'.

S!: Who are the worst record snobs, soulies or garage heads?
KD: Soulies by a mile. At least garage heads will entertain the idea of a different style of music.

S!: What's your "White Whale" record and is there a holy grail record that you're still unable to find? What have been some of your best finds?

"It was me that made up the term 'deep funk' to describe the music I was playing at those nights. It seemed to me that all those great records had been missed because of their rarity, and I had built up a mountain of them whilst looking for unknown northern in the States"

KD: My "White Whale" record is The Tremors' 'Wondering Why'. I worry that I'll never find one but am gagging for a copy. I would love to find some total unknown garage killers too. I did find one recently that nobody seems to know, The Fugitives' 'Time Is Set For Now' on Lin-Dan Records.

S!: There must be a few records that you can always go back to time and time again. Name a few of them and why they are so special.
KD: At the moment I'm re-buying some of the garage northern I used to love in the '70s. The 7 Dwarfs' 'Stop Girl', The Burning Bush's 'Keeps On Burning', General Assembly's 'Sensitive Mind', Wakefield Sun's 'Trypt On Love'.

S!: Your compilations are often interesting and responsible for breaking many rare sounds. How much planning goes into them? Which were your faves and are there any more planned?
KD: Plenty more planned now I work at Ace Records. Very little planning. They always tend to be my favourite records from my current deejay playlist. They were all my favourite at the time of doing them. If you ask me now which is my fave, the answer will be "the last one". S!

Contributors: Ben Adlam, Duncan Fletcher, Sarah Gregory, Jon 'Mojo' Mills, Paul Richie

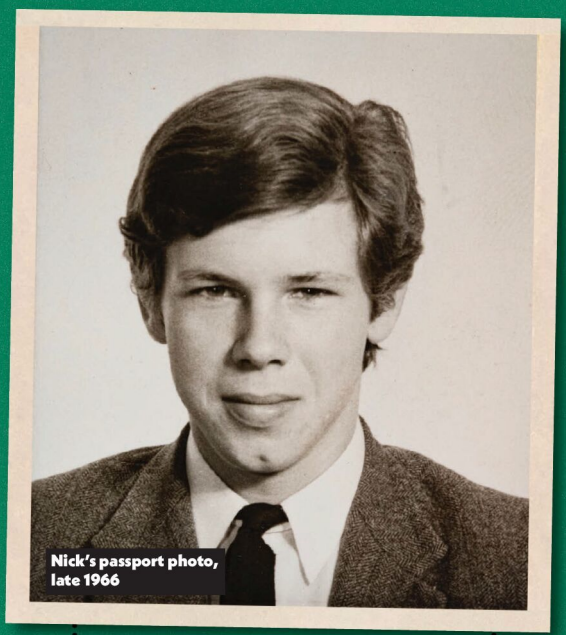
Catch Keb deejaying at Primal Scream, The Jesus & Mary Chain, The Black Angels' show at Crystal Palace Bowl on 4th August. See his Instagram page for forthcoming events, including a show at The *Shindig!* Happening

Stranger THAN FICTION

In writing his new biography of **NICK DRAKE, RICHARD MORTON JACK** examined every aspect of Drake's life objectively and thoroughly. Here he identifies and examines a baker's dozen of misconceptions and myths surrounding this most enigmatic of artists

1. "Nick's parents were millionaires"

Although Nick's grandparents were professionals, and both his parents were privately educated, there was no inherited wealth in the family. Indeed, ill health caused financial hardship for Nick's paternal grandfather, meaning that Rodney, Nick's father, was entirely self-reliant as of the age of 18. The material comfort Nick grew up in was the result of Rodney's hard work, initially in the timber business in Burma and India, and then running an engineering firm in the Midlands. Rodney's prosperity afforded his family security, and luxuries such as an annual foreign holiday, but they certainly didn't number among the idle rich, and Nick had no financial cushion when he left Cambridge to focus on music full-time.



Nick's passport photo, late 1966

2. "Nick's childhood was emotionally distant"

The Drakes were a close and loving family, for whom displays of affection were commonplace. As their good friend Guy Norton puts it, Rodney was "unquestionably a loving father and would never have made himself unapproachable to his children", while Nick's sister Gabrielle adds, "My mum was incredibly tactile... The joy of her was that she was so available for a hug." Their decision to send their children away to boarding school did not reflect coldness: it was simply the convention for people of their background and means, and Nick is not known to have suggested that he suffered as a result. As Gabrielle summarises, "We were not the frigid family so often imagined to be the norm in the English upper-middle classes."

3. "Nick was a Cambridge scholar"

Nick's academic career was consistently mediocre, reflecting a lack of interest and motivation rather than low intelligence (his IQ was assessed as "above average" upon joining Marlborough College in January 1962, aged 13). He was placed in forms for the brighter boys but was more interested in music than schoolwork and failed numerous public exams. Having twice botched his A-levels, he squeezed into Cambridge by taking its own entrance exam at a crammer, and through the tireless efforts of his housemaster Dennis Silk (who was friends with Fitzwilliam College's Admissions Tutor).

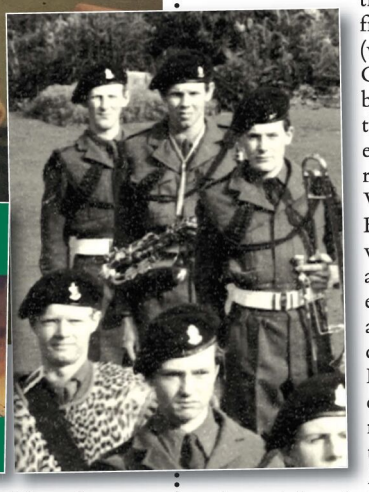
Once there, Nick did the bare minimum of work, and was placed in the bottom 12% of his subject's cohort across the university in both sets of exams he sat (in the summers of '68 and '69) before dropping out. His contemporary Brian Wells describes his attitude towards his studies as "more than averagely lazy", while his father wrote to him at the time, "We are slow developers in our family and you, I believe, are no exception to this."

4. "Nick was discovered when he shared a bill with Fairport Convention in February 1968"

A group of Nick's friends helped put on a series of "happenings" in London's Roundhouse in the run-up to Christmas 1967, under the name Circus Alpha Centauri. Seeking to pad out the bill, they asked him to play on the folk and blues night – Thursday 21st December – alongside Pentangle, Al Stewart, Dorris Henderson and others. His short set caught the attention of the bassist with Fairport Convention, Ashley Hutchings (who was there to watch the headliner, Country Joe & The Fish, rather than to play). Fairport had recently joined Joe

PHOTO COURTESY OF GABRIELLE DRAKE

"Nick was very much in control, he did all the communicating." Nick in 1969



Nick at Far Leys, Christmas 1967; '69 debut album *Five Leaves Left*; Nick (back middle) with the Combined Cadet Force band, '64; *Bryter Layter* and *Pink Moon* (opposite)

Boyd's Witchseason Productions roster; spotting Nick afterwards, Ashley offered to put him in touch with Joe, catalysing his career.

5. "Nick was an avid drug-taker"

Nick expressed curiosity about drugs after leaving Marlborough in the summer of 1966, and smoked dope for the first time with some schoolmates in London that October. Thereafter he became a regular but – it seems – not excessive hash smoker. The only other illegal drug anyone can remember him taking is speed, in a Birmingham nightclub the following summer. (It had been foisted on a friend of his, and they agreed to try it.) No reliable witness can remember him ever taking anything else, possible as it is that he tried LSD (or was spiked). "I was a fairly adventurous drug taker and he never asked me if I could get hold of anything stronger than dope," says his good friend Alex Henderson.

Nick lived at home from late '71, and his vigilant parents were under the impression that he never smoked dope thereafter. As for heroin, another friend, Jo Dingemans, saw him looking "thin and unkempt" in '72 and recalls, "When I asked if he was taking hard drugs he vehemently said he wasn't." That makes sense to Brian Wells, who saw him frequently in his last years (and became a psychiatrist specialising in addiction). "Nick wasn't into instant gratification in the way someone like I was, or someone who becomes an addict is," he reflects. "He was the guy who would have a puff on a joint and pass it on."

6. "Nick hated performing and only played a handful of gigs"

By general consensus, and without being arrogant about it, Nick knew that he was talented and enjoyed playing in attentive environments. After Circus Alpha Centauri, where Asley Hutchings was struck by his powerful stage presence, and which his mother recalled him describing as "the most thrilling thing he'd ever done", he played both publicly and privately in numerous settings around Cambridge, where no one remembers him being nervous. As of 1969 he played around 40 known gigs, and almost certainly a good deal more. That September he supported Fairport in a packed Royal Festival Hall, where he finished to an ovation and Joe Boyd – who hadn't seen him live before – says he was "magnificent… absolutely mesmerising".

However, the arrangements on his records were impossible to reproduce by himself, and he was unsuited to the camaraderie and hassles of life on the road, let alone to dealing with hecklers, or bantering as he tuned up between songs. Unsurprisingly, he found it dispiriting when people ignored him as he played support slots – but the main difficulty he faced in developing as a performer was the onset of his illness over the course of '70, which made him steadily less able to marshal himself in any way. He gave his last known performance in Soho's Les Cousins that August, at which he was obviously mentally unwell rather than simply suffering from stage fright.

7. "Nick and John Martyn were like brothers"

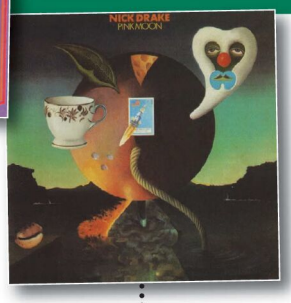
Nick met John towards the end of 1968, through their mutual friend Paul Wheeler (who had just started at Cambridge, a year behind Nick). At much the same time John embarked on an intense romance with another Witchseason artist, Beverley Kutner, with whom Nick was already friendly. Nick enjoyed John's playing and boisterous charisma, and they had Island Records in common (John had released two albums by that point, while *Five Leaves Left* was well underway), but their personalities were very different and Nick was not slow to perceive the volatility and excess that lurked beneath John's bonhomie.

They played guitar together in private, and John recognised and encouraged Nick's gifts, but observers felt that he was also jealous of him – not the other way around. This was partly to do with music, but also to do with Nick's physical presence, social background and Cambridge education. As Nick's illness took hold, and John's drink and drug intake soared, it was Bev who instinctively understood Nick's need for space and silence, and whose company he sought. "I think Nick's friendship with John was really all about Bev," contends Joe Boyd, while Paul Wheeler adds, "In my mind the closeness of John's relationship with Nick has been mythologised. At the time I remember John being offhand about him… John thought depression was a weakness... Bev had a more instinctive understanding of what it meant."

8. "Nick wasn't happy with *Bryter Layter*"

The commercial failure of *Five Leaves Left* in no way diminished Joe Boyd's belief in Nick. "We were dumbfounded that no one bought it," as engineer John Wood puts it, with the result that "With the

"The main difficulty Nick faced in developing as a performer was the onset of his illness over the course of 1970, which made him steadily less able to marshal himself in any way"



second album there was a definite move towards making a more approachable, broadly appealing record." Nick worked long and hard on the arrangements with Robert Kirby in late 1969 and early '70, and Robert recalled the album's gestation as a "very happy period, a very up period". Far from having to accept whatever Robert devised, Island's David Sandison stated that "Nick personally supervised every aspect of Kirby's arrangements."

As with *Five Leaves Left*, Nick was quietly authoritative in the studio in January and February '70. "He had always been assertive about what he wanted, but he was more overtly so," continues John. "He always got what he wanted and was very quick to say if he didn't like something. He was polite but firm – he had a way of stating his view in the studio that put you off answering back." For drummer Mike Kowalski, "Nick was very much in control, he did all the communicating. He was very demonstrative. He'd let you know just what he wanted.": Saxophonist Ray Warleigh concurred. "He was softly-spoken but knew exactly what he wanted."

For Robert, the upshot was that *Bryter Layter* was "100% Nick's work and how he wanted it at that time". That was certainly the impression Joe and John got when Nick came to Sound Techniques to approve the final mixes. At the time of its much-delayed release in March '71, he vaguely told Jerry Gilbert of *Sounds* that "I'm not altogether clear about this album – I haven't got to terms with the whole presentation" – but that was far from him complaining that he'd been forced into a sound or approach he wasn't comfortable with.

9. "Nick only gave one interview"

There are two known interviews with Nick. The first appeared in the 30th May 1970 issue of the girls' weekly *Jackie*, which found space for surprisingly hip music coverage amid the romantic fiction, pin-ups and skincare tips. The feature about Nick was written under the pseudonym Samantha for the regular "Sam Meets the Goodlookers" column. (Sam's true identity – whether male or female – is unknown and probably unknowable.) In the short but insightful piece, Nick briefly discusses his background, his time at Cambridge, his decision to focus on music full-time, his songwriting process and his views on contemporary culture. His second known interview appeared in *Sounds* on 13th March '71, in which he discusses *Bryter Layter*, his live career and future plans with Jerry Gilbert. It's not impossible that he gave others, though his mental state declined sharply as of '71, so they're likely to be from earlier; when Connor McKnight of *ZigZag* tried to contact him in the summer of '74 he got no reply.

10. "Nick wordlessly dropped the *Pink Moon* master tapes at Island"

Following Joe Boyd's return to the US in December 1970, Nick met Chris Blackwell at Island's headquarters in Basing Street to discuss his future. "We agreed that he would continue to record with John Wood, with him acting as his own producer and me reimbursing him for any finished albums," explains Chris. As such he did not require Island's permission or involvement when he came to record *Pink Moon* in October '71. When the recordings were finished, John ran off a 7½ IPS copy for Nick, which he immediately took to Island to exchange for his agreed £500 advance from Chris. "I would never have let the master tape out of my hands!" declares John.

11. "Nick would have been fine if he'd been a commercial success"

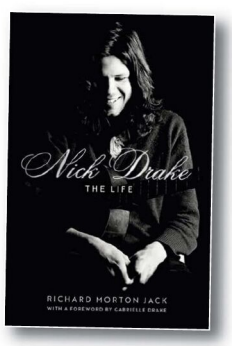
Nick's mental illness had no single cause, and the numerous treatments he attempted had little effect. He was certainly demoralised by the sense that his music was being released into a vacuum, but fame and fortune had never been his goal and, as his mother put it, "If he'd been a wild success, with people clamouring for him, I think he couldn't have stood the pressure of it." Instead, he was desperate to feel that his work was resonating with others of his generation, however few. "He had always longed to get through to young people, particularly young people who had difficulties in life like he did, and he just thought he hadn't," recalled his mother.

12. "Nick had almost finished his fourth album when he died"

One of the most tragic facets of Nick's illness was that it robbed him of his creativity. In his *Sounds* tribute (printed in the 14th December 1974 issue), Jerry Gilbert stated that of late Nick had been "totally immersed in the prospect of completing his fourth album." Alas, this was not the case: over his final three years he had tried repeatedly to write songs, but – greatly to his frustration – very few came. He made demos of four in July '74 but did not consider them good enough to release, or even pursue. "He said they should have been a lot better and that they were substandard," recalled his mother. Although he typed out lyrics to several others that September, no music for them appears to exist, and towards the end of his life much of his music-making was in what his father termed "single-phrase-repeated-ad-nauseam style. We thought this rather ominous". It was as if he had been awaiting a creative lift-off that never came and had come to realise it never would.

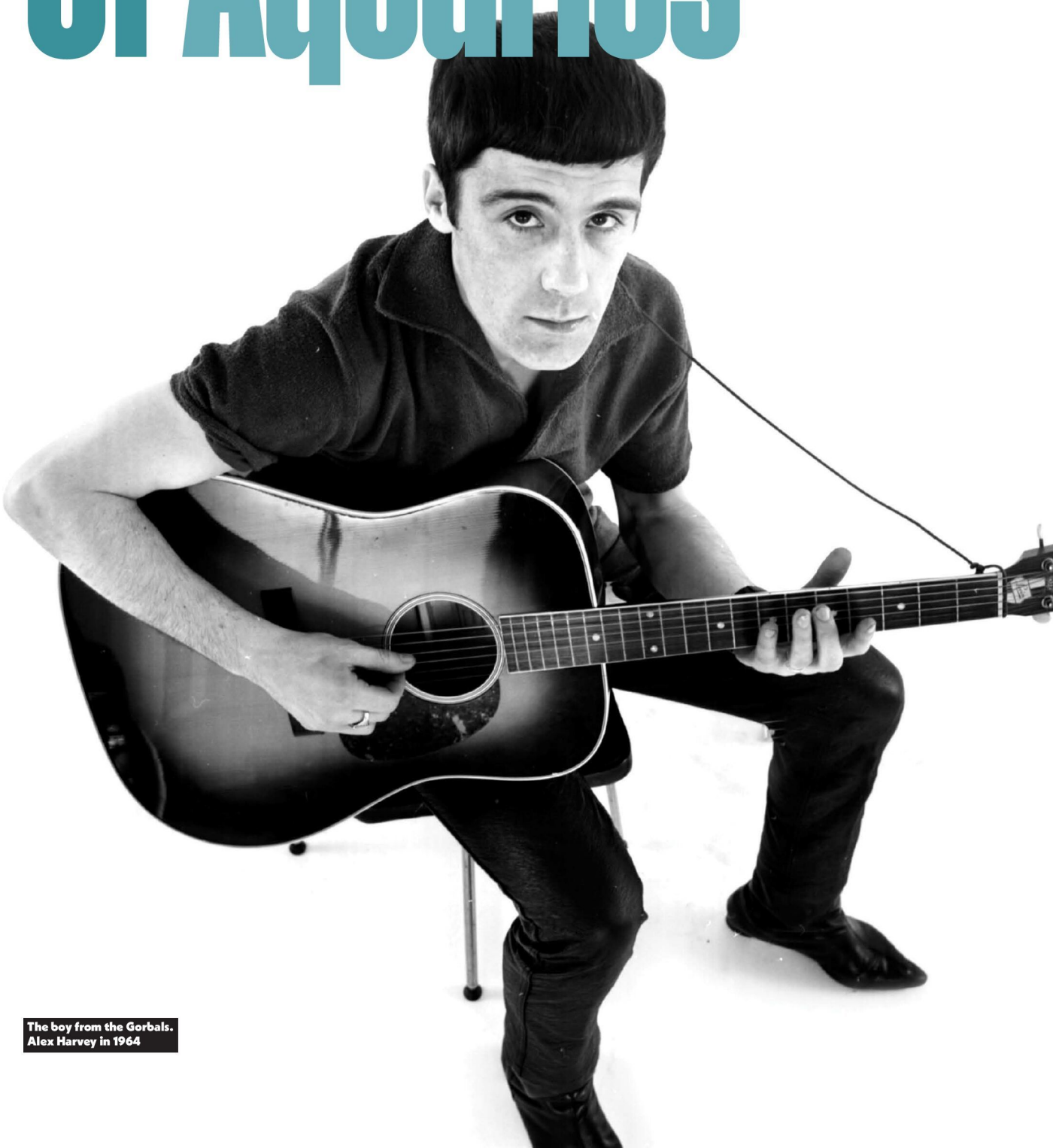
13. "Nick's death was a tragic accident"

Nick had been intermittently taking anti-depressants since 1972. Following a suicide attempt in February '73 – when he took 36 Valium pills – his parents locked away any medicine they thought might be dangerous. Alas, they did not realise that Tryptizol, a prescribed medicine that he occasionally used as a sleeping aid, presented a threat. After a cold and restless night, at dawn on 24th November '74 he swallowed around 60 of them. Although he left no note, the sheer number – far in excess of the minimum for a fatal dose – gave the coroner no choice but to record a verdict of suicide, rather than accident or misadventure. Hard though the fact was to accept, Nick's sister draws comfort from the reflection that "Nick wanted it to work… I believe the actual act of taking the pills was an impulsive one, but I believe the will was a deep one."



Nick Drake: The Life by Richard Morton Jack is published by John Murray

Alex In The Age Of Aquarius



The boy from the Gorbals. Alex Harvey in 1964

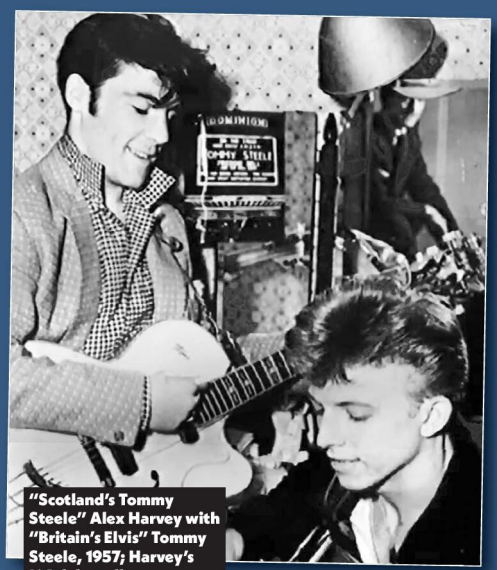
A rock 'n' roll pirate in a bee-striped t-shirt, flanked by a creepy emerald-clad clown and a blank-eyed pretty Boy Blue. This is how most people remember The Sensational Alex Harvey Band, as they rose phoenix-like from the ashes of two moribund careers to become the biggest-grossing live act in the UK, chalking up critically acclaimed albums and smash hit singles along the way. **PETER GALLAGHER** grows his hair and goes in search of **ALEX HARVEY**'s hidden years

A decade previously, their charismatic frontman had fronted The Soul Band, playing all-nighters in Hamburg and winning the admiration of his fellow performers if not John Q Public. Between the Soul and the Sensational lay a fascinating if often overlooked period in Harvey's career, one that saw the Zelig of pop become a fixture of the Soho club scene, record a staggeringly eclectic body of work, belt out England's alternative national anthem, dabble in psychedelia, and join the cast of the most talked-about show in town.

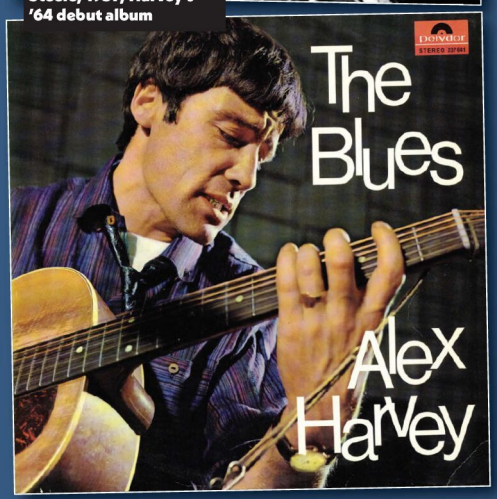
Glasgow, spring 1966. The Dennistoun Palais is the city's largest dancehall: capacity 1,800. Stars shine down from its ceiling. With its revolving stage, the venue is the height of showbiz sophistication. Playing the Pally is the aspiration of many a local band, but the rhythm guitarist and occasional lead vocalist of the nameless outfit currently occupying the coveted Friday and Saturday night residency is dissatisfied. He is Alex Harvey and he has been here before. For him, the ceiling stars hold no glamour; they are tawdry symbols of parochialism and defeat, beacons signifying one step forward and two steps back.

Things should have gone so differently for the Gorbals boy. In '57, he beat 600 hopefuls in a nationwide competition to be crowned Scotland's answer to Tommy Steele. As well as £25 prize money, he was awarded a film test and an audition with a record company. Nothing came of these last two, and Harvey was still billing himself as "Scotland's Tommy Steele" in backwater venues three years later, long after the Bermondsey Boy had made the successful transition to musical theatre.

One of those boondocks stops was Alloa Town Hall.



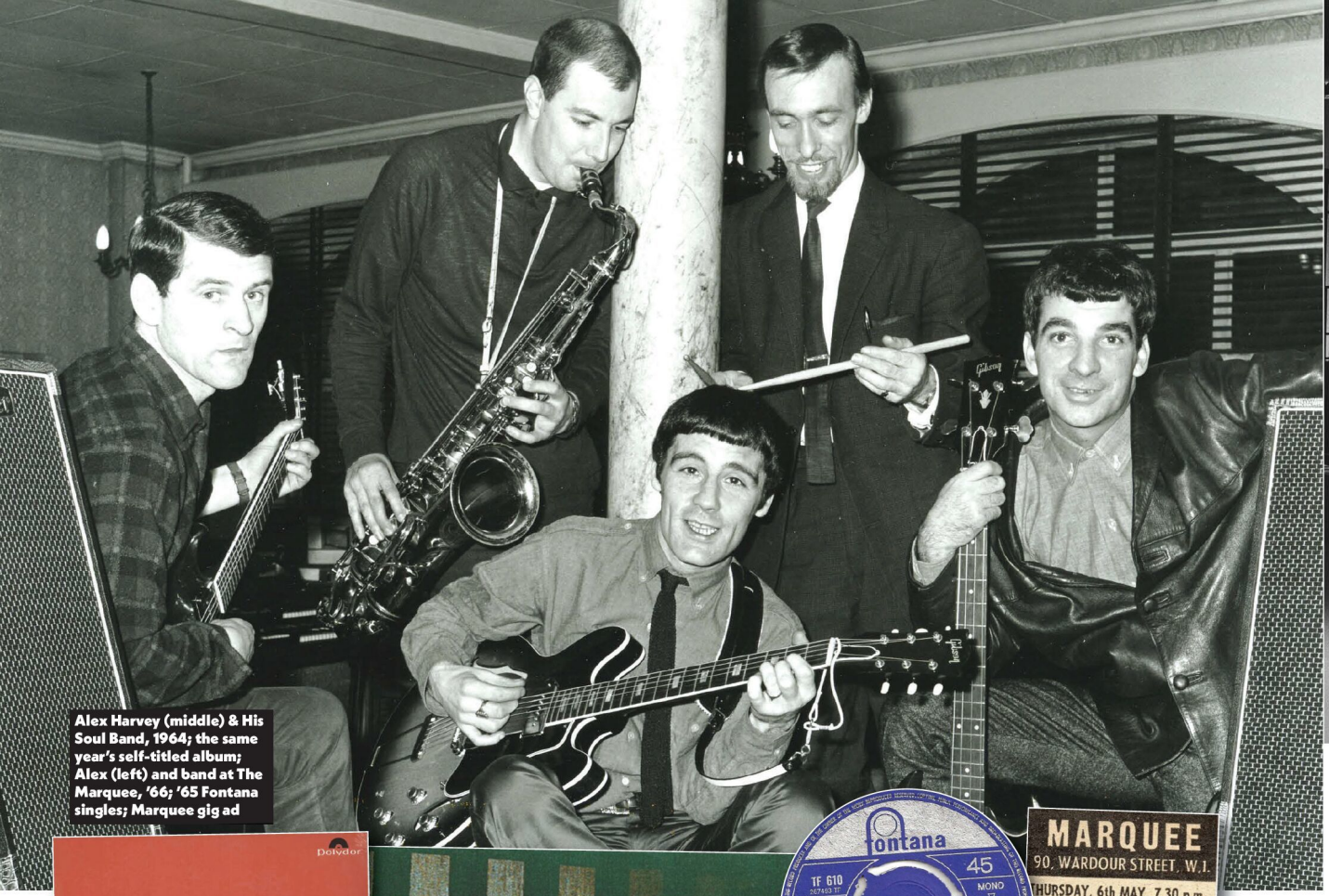
"Scotland's Tommy Steele" Alex Harvey with "Britain's Elvis" Tommy Steele, 1957; Harvey's '64 debut album



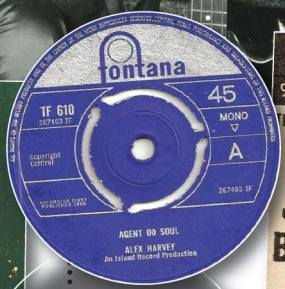
On 20th May '60, Alex Harvey & His Beat Band supported Johnny Gentle & His Group. Johnny was soon aboard the next train to Obscurity, but by '66, three members of "his group" – Paul McCartney, John Lennon and George Harrison – had, with Ringo Starr, conquered the world and changed popular music forever. Such was their dizzying success they were mere months from abandoning the live circuit entirely, while Alex was back treading the Pally's revolving boards.

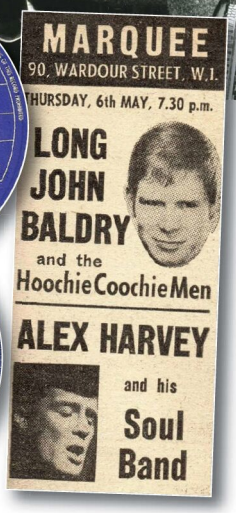
In the intervening years Alex had formed The Soul Band and had followed the pre-Fab Four to Hamburg. He soon earned a reputation as a ferocious performer and released his debut album *Alex Harvey & His Soul Band* on Polydor. It went nowhere, while its follow-up remained unreleased for decades. In Hamburg he was a Big Man On Campus, but when he made the switch to London in '65 he was like all BMOCs after graduation. Harvey dissolved the Soul Band and returned to Glasgow to lick his wounds.

The Dancin', once Glasgow's favourite venue, was now in the twilight of its popularity. The Pally's days



Alex Harvey (middle) & His Soul Band, 1964; the same year's self-titled album; Alex (left) and band at The Marquee, '66; '65 Fontana singles; Marquee gig ad





were equally numbered, and it was earmarked for conversion to a roller disco rink. At 30 years old, Harvey must have felt equally obsolete. Not for the last time in his life, he was at a crossroads.

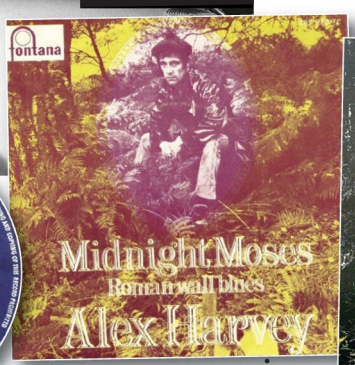
The April '66 issue of *Time* magazine proclaimed London "The Swinging City" and even the mighty Beatles had recognised the necessity of basing themselves there. In an attempt to kickstart his career, Alex made the permanent move south. It cost him his first marriage, his wife Mary preferring to stay in Glasgow with their son Alex Jr. Harvey's success was by no means guaranteed: for every Donovan or Marmalade, there was a Poets or a Beatstalkers; for every Lulu, who in '65 had taken Harvey's arrangement of 'Shout' into the Top 10, there was an Anteeeks.

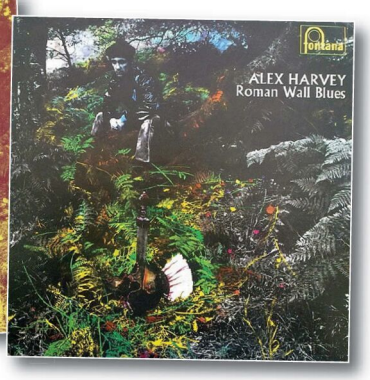
On the plus side, Harvey still had in his pocket the concluding half of a two-single deal with Fontana. The label had issued Harvey's stomping rendition of Edwin Starr's 'Agent 00 Soul' in '65, even photographing the singer in front of James Bond's Aston Martin for publicity purposes, but it troubled neither radio airways nor cash registers. Alex followed-up with 'Work Song', the Nat Adderley jazz standard that crossed over to pop when given lyrics by Oscar Brown Jr. He was backed on the record by The John Cameron Group, a crack cohort of top musicians. Cameron would later become musical director for Donovan before moving into scoring films, beginning with *Kes* ('69). Those of a certain age might best recall Cameron for his instrumental arrangement of 'Whole Lotta Love' (CCS); it served as *Top Of The Pops'* theme tune throughout the '70s.

"I can't remember much about the session, as we didn't stop working in those days," says Cameron today, "but I know I enjoyed working with Alex. Good tracks!" He did however recollect that the session players included Ronnie Ross, then also acting as saxophone tutor to one David Bowie (who would later employ Ross to supply the baritone sax on Lou Reed's 'Walk On The Wild Side'), and Andy White, who had drummed on The Beatles' debut 'Love Me Do' and Lulu's version of 'Shout'. Despite the stellar cast and the well-known tune, 'Work Song' followed 'Agent 00 Soul' into oblivion.

Perhaps the single didn't catch fire because Harvey and crew retained the jazziness of the original, and that was just too trad, dad, for the London of UFO, *The International Times* and The Perfumed Garden. For his next project, Harvey tapped into the prevailing zeitgeist more so than he had before or would again and formed psychedelic outfit Giant Moth. His bandmates comprised Jim Condron

Alex makes a rare appearance on UK TV, 1965; flirtations with psychedelia, '67; '69 Dutch single and UK album





"Chas Chandler was now managing Jimi Hendrix and urged Alex to check out his new protégé; Harvey did so and was so inspired he came away with renewed determination to pursue a successful career in music"

and George Butler, the rhythm section of the now-defunct Anteeeks, and Irish harmonica/flute player Mox Gowland.

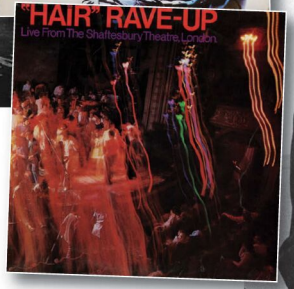
The band secured a two-single deal with Decca, and each side of their debut 45, Harvey originals both, featured folksy psychedelia with an on-trend Eastern tinge. A-side 'The Sunday Song' was as eminently hummable as contemporaneous psych-pop releases by The Small Faces and The Move, while flipside 'Horizons' was less poppy but strong enough that it could have earned its own A-side. The flute and the flanging established its psych credentials, and while not in the same league musically as, say, 'Strawberry Fields Forever' / 'Penny Lane', the single remains a valid memento of the times. Syd Barrett reviewed the record for *Melody Maker*: "Nice sounds, yeah. Wow. It moved me a little bit" – knock yourself out, Syd – "but I don't think it will be a hit."

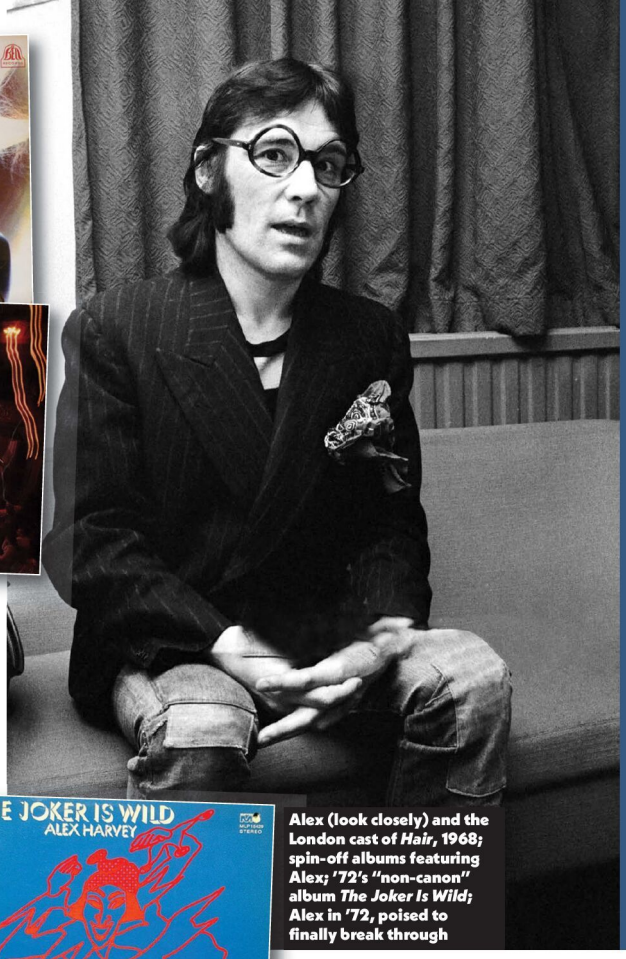
More than any of Harvey's previous releases, 'The Sunday Song' was the one most likely to succeed, but alas it too stiffed. One reason might have been Decca's baffling decision to release it under Harvey's name alone. Presumably, they believed his name carried more currency, but had they gone with the Giant Moth moniker they would have been presenting the single as something completely new – which it was – rather than yet another song by that Glaswegian who had been knocking on pop's door for the better part of a decade.

The second Giant Moth single was a cover of The Incredible String Band's 'Maybe Someday', which suggested Harvey had abandoned his habit of exhuming songs from previous decades and sought inspiration from the current music scene. While an astute choice, it paled compared to both the previous 45 and the ISB original. B-side 'Curtains For My Baby', a Harvey original, confirmed the old adage about leopards and spots and found Alex back raking over dem ol' blues again. The song would have fitted comfortably on any of his previous long players, but in '67 it was the wrong sound at the wrong time and is the weakest of the Giant Moth cuts. A few gigs later, the Lepidoptera Giganticus was extinct.

The rest of the year and the first half of '68 found the singer languishing in the creative doldrums. He had no band, no record contract and no outlet, but he and new love Trudy now had a son, Tyro, and bills to pay. Harvey got by playing pubs, clubs and restaurants, crooning 'I Left My Heart In San Francisco' and future hit 'Delilah' to the clink of crockery and cutlery. Despite steady work, this wasn't what he had envisioned after 10 years in show business, and he considered calling it a day. Fortunately, a chance meeting with a former Animal led to a "Robert The Bruce and the spider" moment. Chas Chandler was now managing Jimi Hendrix and urged Alex to check out his new protégé; Harvey did so and was so inspired he came away with renewed determination to pursue a successful career in music. As it transpired, he was about to embark on one of the most hectic periods of his career.

Harvey became acquainted with Derek Wadsworth while playing clubs like The Pheasantry on King's Road. Wadsworth, a jazzman who had previously served as Dusty Springfield's musical director, had just been appointed MD for the London production of *Hair*, musical theatre's first full-scale foray into the counterculture. *Hair* was big on breaking down barriers: the producers insisted on a fully integrated, multi-racial cast; the audience joined the cast onstage during the "be-in" finale; and the orchestra, or Hairband, weren't consigned to the pit but sat onstage throughout the performance. The show promoted racial harmony and sexual freedom, attacked authoritarianism, and depicted illegal drug-taking. It also featured a blink-and-you'll-miss-it nude scene that made it the hottest ticket in town. When the show opened on 27th September '68, Harvey was one of the original "tribe", playing guitar in the Hairband. During its run, he would appear alongside such upcoming talent as Elaine Page, Paul Nicholas, Richard





"Hair was six days a week with two shows on Fridays and Saturdays. They started at 10am or 11am, and then after they'd finished the show they played clubs from 11pm until three am. It was good money, but there was no time for anything else"

Alex (look closely) and the London cast of *Hair*, 1968; spin-off albums featuring Alex; '72's "non-canon" album *The Joker Is Wild*; Alex in '72, poised to finally break through

O'Brien, Tim Curry, Sonja Kristina, Marsha Hunt, Floella Benjamin and Oliver Tobias (see sidebar).

Alex had inadvertently hit the big time, but it was far from Easy Street. Laurie Baker played bass in the Hairband, and his wife Brigid described his and Alex's brutal schedule. "*Hair* was six days a week with two shows on Fridays and Saturdays. They started at 10am or 11am, and then after they'd finished the show they played clubs from 11pm until three am. Laurie and Alex played in different clubs, but they used to walk down Shaftesbury Avenue together on their way to Leicester Square. It was good money, but there was no time for anything else."

Writer and actor Richard O'Brien found a kindred spirit in Alex. "I first met him when he was playing rhythm guitar, sitting on the hood of an old truck, on the stage of The Shaftesbury Theatre. He had a roguish grin that encouraged playful naughtiness. His outlook on life was *very* appealing to me." With their shared interests in music, old monster movies, and comic books, it is not surprising O'Brien and Harvey hit it off. "We had a lot of things in common, sharing a love of many populist pleasures. He played guitar on a song entitled 'Tulip Baker' that I had written and another chap had decided to record. Later on, he told me that he would have loved to have sung it himself. I was thrilled and asked him why he didn't, and he said in his very Glaswegian accent, 'I can't say Tulip'."

Regarding Alex's time in *Hair*, O'Brien notes, "He was happy to have a regular gig and loved the social and interracial mix of the company, but he did hanker after something more up his own street." Harvey took care of that hankering in '69 by releasing *Roman Wall Blues*, his first solo album in four years. On it he is backed by his brother Les and the Hairband regulars, including Derek Wadsworth and Laurie Baker. It opens with 'Midnight Moses', a song the singer would later resurrect with The Sensational Alex Harvey Band and which would feature in his set for the rest of his career. This take has a lovely percussive introduction by drummer Pete Woolf before the not inconsiderable brass section come in with the big, pumping riff that is surely one of rock's best. *Roman Wall Blues* did the same business as all Harvey releases to date, i.e. none at all, and the singer was absolutely right to recycle 'Midnight Moses' with SAHB. It would have been criminal for it to have been lost on this all but forgotten album.

Other notable songs include 'Hammer Song', which would also be reworked for SAHB's debut album *Framed*, and the title track. Knowing Alex's love of history, Brigid Scott Baker introduced him to the WH Auden poem of the same name, thus paving the way for the most mind-boggling co-writing credit since Christina Rossetti and Gustav Holst hunkered down to produce cheerless festive fave 'In The Bleak Midwinter'. Not everything works – 'Donna' is one of *Hair*'s more forgettable songs – but with solid original material and a band honed to perfection after nearly a year of playing together day in and day out, *Roman Wall Blues* is possibly Alex's strongest solo platter.

In addition to appearing on the Original London Cast *Hair* album the previous year, Harvey contributed to two vinyl spin-offs in '69, *Hair Rave-Up: Live From The Shaftesbury Theatre, London* and *Band On The Wagon* by the Hairband. The sleeve notes of the former remind us that "there is no final curtain to the show, so the swingiest cast of all time invite you to join them on stage at The Shaftesbury Theatre for what has become widely known as the *Hair* Rave-Up." This album does not document one of those post-show stage invasions, but rather a one-off gig that took place before a specially invited audience featuring a selection of songs that regularly included in the "Rave-Up". Harvey takes control of the microphone for four tracks, including the musical's title track, usually performed by the entire cast with solo spots for Paul Nicholas and Oliver Tobias. Harvey effortlessly makes the song his own, even allowing his inner Glaswegian to emerge ever so slightly, -a nod to his future vocal direction – and the Hairband are nothing short of thrilling. The album also includes a couple of Harvey originals, 'Royal International Love-In' and 'Bond Street Baby'. *Band On The Wagon* also contains some Harvey-penned tunes, most notably 'Big Louie', co-written with his old Giant Moth mucker Jim Condron. It too would be revived for *Framed* and would be

Hair Today, Here Tomorrow

The original London production of Hair may be unequalled in the number of careers it launched. Here are some of the first tribe's illustrious members, and a snapshot of what they did next

Floella Benjamin: Benjamin appeared in television series such as *Within These Walls*, *Angels* and *Bergerac*, but is probably best known for her 12 years presenting *Play School*. She is currently The Mayor Of *Chuggington* on TV and a member of The House Of Lords in real life. Her autobiography *What Are You Doing Here?* was published in 2023.

Tim Curry: Curry has had a long career on stage, film and television, and has enjoyed a prolific second career as a voice artist and audiobook narrator. He originated the role of Dr Frank-N-Furter in the stage production of *The Rocky Horror Show* and continued in the role in the cult hit film *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. He also portrayed Pennywise in the 1990 TV adaptation of *It*.

Marsha Hunt: Hunt continued acting, appearing in movies such as *Dracula AD 1972* and *Never Say Never Again*, but moved into writing in the '80s. She has produced three volumes of autobiography and four novels, the first of which, *Joy*, she adapted into a one-woman stage show.

Sonja Kristina: Kristina has been the sole constant in prog-rockers Curved Air since their formation in 1970. The band split up in '76 but reformed in 2008, since when they've recorded intermittently and toured regularly.

Paul Nicholas: Nicholas has appeared in film and television, most famously '80s sitcom *Just Good Friends*, and was also briefly a chart-troubler with froth such as 'Dancing With The Captain'. His true love is musical theatre – he played lead roles in *The Pirates Of Penzance*, *Barnum* and *Camelot* – and he has headed his own successful production company since 1990.

Richard O'Brien: O'Brien is most famous as the creator of *The Rocky Horror Show*, which was first staged in 1973, and co-wrote and appeared in its '75 movie adaptation. He hosted Channel 4's game show *The Crystal Maze* in the '90s and remains a stage and screen regular in the 21st century.

Elaine Paige: Often referred to as The First Lady Of British Musical Theatre, Paige has been a presence in the West End since her *Hair* debut in 1968. She has appeared in such high-profile productions as *Evita*, *Cats*, *Chess* and *Sunset Boulevard*, and has hosted her *Elaine Paige On Sunday* radio show since 2004.

***Hair* cast members Paul Nicholas, Annabel Leventon and Oliver Tobias outside The Shaftesbury Theatre, 1968**

Oliver Tobias: Tobias gained pin-up status playing the title character in *Arthur Of The Britons* (1972–73), and a certain notoriety for *The Stud* ('78). Since the '90s he's mostly appeared on German television, although he did make an appearance in the movie version of *Dad's Army* in 2015.

optimistically released for the '72 festive season under the wonderfully noir-ish title 'There's No Lights On The Christmas Tree, Mother, They're Burning Big Louie Tonight'.

It was during the early *Hair* years that Alex recorded perhaps the two most outlier tracks in his long, eclectic career, although neither would see commercial release until the 21st century. His then-manager David Firmstone was producing a choral album, ultimately unfinished, to which Alex contributed a reverential reading of Blake's 'Jerusalem' backed by The Brighton Festival Choir. Quietly majestic, it should now be a *de rigueur* inclusion in all Harvey compilations to demonstrate the scope of his abilities. While less essential the second song, a version of the children's song 'My Grandfather's Clock', also illustrates this range; presumably it was recorded for another Firmstone project that failed to see fruition.

Alex continued his vinyl adventures in '70, as he and other members of the Hairband contributed to guitarist Ray Russell's blandly named but musically adventurous Rock Workshop. Harvey lent his vocals to a handful of tracks on the band's eponymous debut, including 'Hole in Her Stocking', yet *another* song destined for inclusion on *Framed*. The raucous Rock Workshop reading is far superior to the later version – sorry, SAHB fans, I should have warned there was sacrilege ahoy – with a brass section so punchy it threatens to burst through the speakers.

Unlikely as it may seem, '70 also saw Harvey briefly form a band with a young Mike Oldfield, Hairband bassist Laurie Baker confirmed to Harvey biographer John Neil Munro that Alex and Oldfield played some gigs together and Derek Wadsworth remembered them actively seeking a record deal. The two met when Oldfield was Harvey and Scott-Baker's "understudy" in *Hair*, but the guitarist later claimed he deliberately got himself fired because he was bored after 10 performances, which some might think is a bit rich coming from the man that unleashed *Incantations* on the world.

The flurry of recording between '68 and '70 would be followed by a nearly two-year hiatus. When Alex returned to the studio it would be to record *The Joker Is Wild*, an album rarely mentioned in Harvey biographies, perhaps because it isn't considered "canon". Aided by brother Leslie and two of his Giant Moth bandmates amongst others, Harvey reputedly only laid down his vocal tracks as a guide for one Tony Caldeira, but Caldeira failed to materialise, and Harvey's cheque for the session bounced as well. It's a grand tale, but the presence of Frank Zappa's 'Willie The Pimp' (Harvey was a huge Zappa fan), 'Hare Krishna' from *Hair*, and Harvey perennials 'Penicillin Blues' and 'Make Love To You' all indicate that the singer had greater involvement than the accepted "origin" story suggests. Following the success of SAHB, *The Joker Is Wild* was shamefully repackaged under the title *This Is The Sensational Alex Harvey Band*.

In a 2000 interview, Alex Harvey Jr asserts that the four years his father spent in *Hair* were the happiest of his life. Being part of a hit West End show meant financial security, although Harvey would still maintain a schedule of post-theatre club gigs. O'Brien remembers that the singer was sometimes provocative in his approach to the audience at late-night affairs in the clubs. "I think that he liked to appear a little dangerous, but it was all an act." It sounds as if Harvey was rehearsing for his next venture. Sunday was his day off, to be spent with Trudy and Tyro at the park or a museum, sometimes in the company of brother Les and Maggie Bell, Les' partner in life and in Stone The Crows.

Hair ran at The Shaftesbury Theatre until July '73, with its closure only forced by the collapse of the venue's roof. Harvey left the show in early '72, having decided he had let the sunshine in once too often. He was at another crossroads, but his manager had been talking to the gaffer of Glaswegian hard-rockers Tear Gas, who, after a two-album career, were at the end of their road. What would happen, they wondered, if they combined their respective acts? At 37 years old and 15 years into his career, Alex Harvey's seemingly impossible dream of becoming a star was about to come true.

Thanks to James Cameron, Richard O'Brien and Brigid Scott-Baker

"I never thought that I would have to sing the theme song for that film. I had been acting silently for four months." Meiko Kaji finds her voice, early '70s

IF LOOKS COULD KILL

MEIKO KAJI is one of the icons of Japanese cinema, her vengeful stare and skilled swordplay lighting up cult exploitation movies such as *Lady Snowblood* and *Female Prisoner Scorpion*. Less well-known outside of Japan is the fact that she enjoyed a successful parallel career as a singer. Blessed with an emotive voice, she offered a compelling mix of Japanese folk melodies with psychedelic rock, funk, jazz and chamber-pop. With classic album *Hajiki Uta* back in print, she sits down with *Shindig!* to discuss her remarkable career.

Words: **PAUL BOWLER**. Interview and translations: **NAOKO ITAMI**

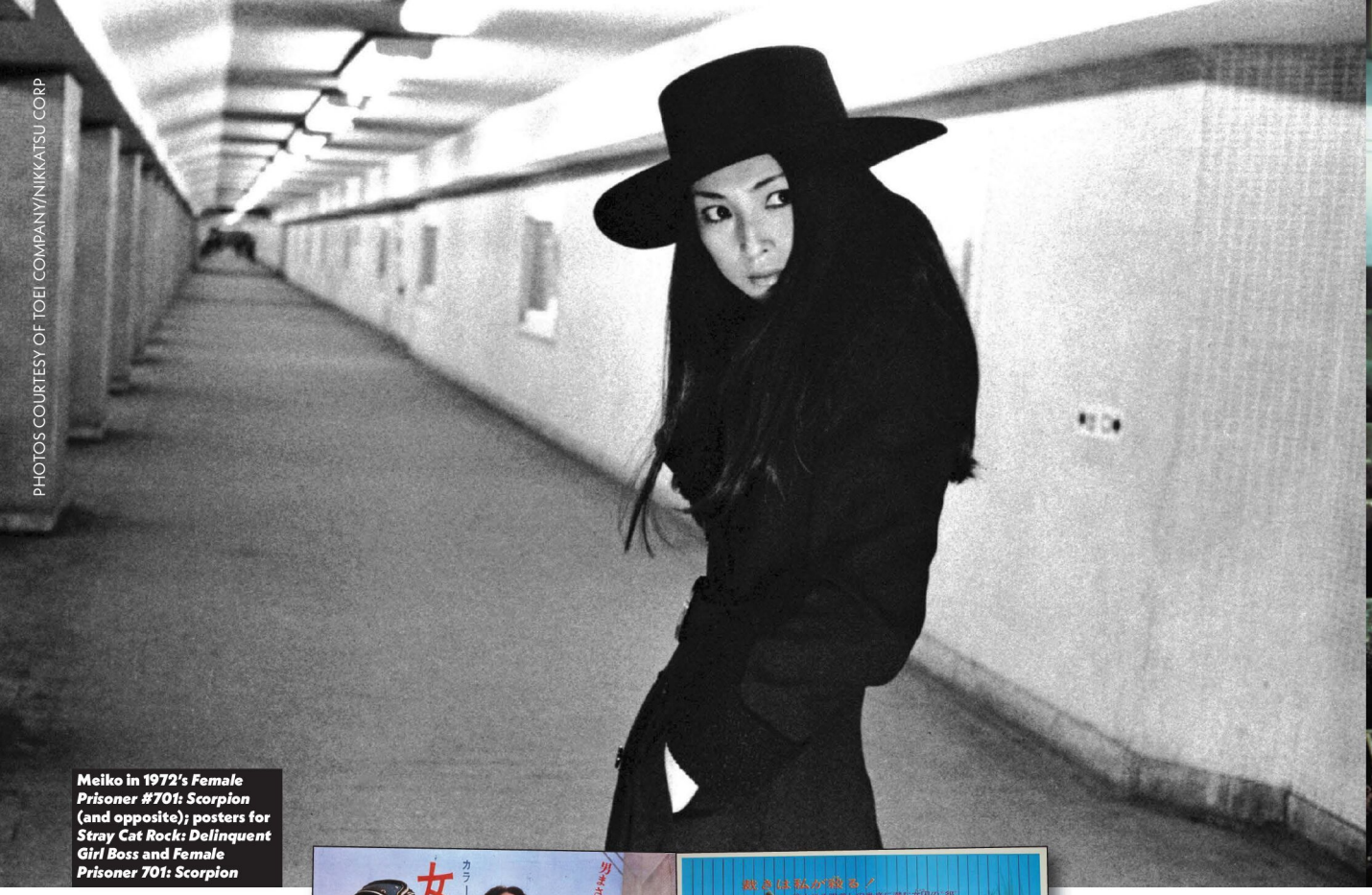
Rising to fame as an actress at the height of the exploitation boom that gripped Japanese cinema in the '60s, Meiko Kaji was a magnetic presence on screen. Outshining her co-stars in supporting roles, she was soon taking star turns as the leader of a girl gang in the *Stray Cat Rock* film series, which mixed knife fights and mild sex scenes with wild partying in psych-rock accompanied nightclubs.

As her film studio Nikkatsu began to focus on softcore porn, Kaji jumped ship and, after signing with Toei, forged a career playing outsider characters. In the successful '70s film series *Female Prisoner Scorpion* she played a lead character almost devoid of lines. Portraying a wronged woman hellbent on revenge, her steely presence and expressive physicality drove her performance, abetted by a remarkable stare full of wrath and fury. *Lady Snowblood* (1973) offered up more of the same, with the addition of spectacular sword fight scenes in snow-blown landscapes.

Initially against her will, Meiko Kaji had been providing the soundtracks for these movies, a necessity at the time for many lead actresses in Japan. Lacking vocal training and unable to read sheet music, she fell back on her on-screen roles for inspiration, imagining herself as the movie characters as she sang. Full of world-weary melodies, the resultant soundtracks for movies such as *Female Prisoner #701: Scorpio* seem to offer a

dramatic vocal outlet for the sorrow her screen characters had forbidden themselves from expressing. Musically, these songs were compellingly set against a stylistic smorgasbord. *Kayōkyoku* (Japanese pop) melodies and traditional instruments were pitched against fuzz and twanging rock guitars, smoky jazz saxophones, funky bass lines and Morricone-style strings. After releasing a number of successful albums in the '70s, Kaji largely retreated from the music industry, her energy focussed on a burgeoning career as a TV actress.

It was Quentin Tarantino who first brought attention to Kaji's acting career in the west, his *Kill Bill* films paying direct homage to *Lady Snowblood* in particular. Two of Kaji's most celebrated songs, 'Urami Bushi' (My Grudge Blues) and 'Shura No Hana' (The Flower Of Carnage) were also used prominently on the soundtracks. While their inclusion led to renewed interest, her music is still somewhat under the radar outside of her homeland. The reissue of five of her classic '70s albums is set to change all that. Meiko Kaji sat down with *Shindig!* to chat about her remarkable dual career.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TOEI COMPANY/NIKKATSU CORP

Meiko in 1972's *Female Prisoner #701: Scorpion* (and opposite); posters for *Stray Cat Rock: Delinquent Girl Boss* and *Female Prisoner 701: Scorpion*

***Shindig!*:** You first gained success as an actress at the film studio Nikkatsu in the '60s. How were those early years and how did your parallel singing career begin?

Meiko Kaji: When I made my debut in 1965, I was a total amateur. I was spotted by a talent scout. I had never studied theatre, or anything else. So it felt like I was thrown into the film industry without knowing right from left.

At that time the situation in the Japanese film industry wasn't good. There were five film companies and they had direct management. It was an era where eight films were in full swing every month, and we finished filming in two weeks. It was a lot of work in a short amount of time. I was really exhausted. After a year, I had appeared in seven movies.

I was forced to sing the theme song all the time, because it was considered natural to sing it when you acted as a heroine for a Nikkatsu film. So I started acting and singing at about the same time, and I began recording for Teichiku Records where I have now been for 58 years.

There used to be Nikkatsu movie theatres all over Japan and when new films were released I had to go there for stage greetings and a talk show. There was a full band in the theatre and I had to sing. As a newcomer, I really didn't have much to say and I was not able to entertain the audience by telling them how acting was hard or how I enjoyed my role or anything like that. So instead of talking to the audience, I would just sing the songs at the order of my boss.

The five companies had an agreement that new actors and actresses were not allowed to work outside of that company for five years. This was the contract for newcomers. So for the first five years, I had to work hard at Nikkatsu. Those five years passed in the blink of an eye. And one of my works, the *Stray Cat Rock* film series, was still selling well.

***S!*:** You were the lead actress for the *Female Prisoner Scorpion* films, yet you have hardly have any lines. In contrast your vocal performance on the theme song 'Urami Bushi' is full of drama. What prompted those creative decisions?

MK: I left Nikkatsu in 1971. It was a company that focused on actors mainly so that actresses were always in supporting roles as the pretty girlfriend. For someone like me who had played in a film like *Stray Cat Rock* I couldn't see myself in such a role. After I quit I didn't think I would go back to the film industry. But I received an offer from Toei to appear in a Yakuza film called *Gincho Wataridori* (*Wandering Ginza Butterfly*). They asked me if I would like to play the lead role, so I was happy to accept the offer. Then the producer said that there was also the possibility of doing a completely different type of film. That was *Female Prisoner #701: Scorpion* (the first of the *Female Prisoner Scorpion* series).

At first I refused, saying that I could not act in such a mentally and physically tough movie. When he asked me to reconsider, I suddenly thought that it

Meiko's first three '70s albums; 1972 pop magazine poster

> "I told the producer I wouldn't do [*Female Prisoner 701: Scorpion*] if I had to follow this script, because **the heroine doesn't need words.** Without saying a word, she gets in at the end and defeats that man, which is the real thrill of this movie"

would be so cool to do this movie if the heroine could go from beginning to end without saying a single word. The original manga has a lot of lines. I thought if that were the case, it would end up being an ordinary female prisoner movie full of fights.

It's a story about a heroine taking revenge after being betrayed by her ex-boyfriend, a detective. I thought that this heroine had had a terrible experience. Their resentment and pain were complicated and too deep to express in words. There's nothing scarier than silence in the world.

I told the producer I wouldn't do it if I had to follow this script, because the heroine doesn't need words. Without saying a word, she gets in at the end and defeats that man, which is the real thrill of this movie. The producer was astonished, this was his film debut. He replied saying he also had one condition, which was to shoot in order. That was unthinkable for a company that schedules sets and locations according to the availability of actors and crew. Two months after we started, he gave me a gloomy look and said, "I'm already prepared to lose my life. It's been two months and you haven't even finished two-thirds of the film. I'm too embarrassed to go to the head office now. I think I'll be killed…" That was the situation, if this fails, everyone will have to hang themselves… We were on edge. It took a little over four months to finish.

There was a film called *Gendai Yakuza: Hitokiri Yota* which was supposed to be the main movie when it opened. But a lot of the audience preferred *Scorpion* even though that was supposed to be the B-movie. As soon as the film company found out, they decided to switch so that *Female Prisoner Scorpion* became the main film. I'm so glad it was a success. If I hadn't succeeded, I wouldn't be able to talk like this now.

S!: I heard that you sang 'Urami Bushi' (the theme song for *Female Prisoner #701: Scorpion*) as though you are playing the character you portrayed in that film. What made you take that approach?
MK: I never thought that I would have to sing the theme song for that film. I was very disappointed because I had been acting silently for four months. The lyrics for Urami Bushi were written by the director who had completed it before the shooting finished. It seemed that he had fallen in love with the theme song I sang for *Wandering Ginza Butterfly*.

After four months of hell shooting the movie had finished, we went to the studio to record. It was very difficult for me to imagine that Nami Matsushima (the *Female Prisoner Scorpion* heroine), who had been silent for four months, would sing. When I asked the music director how to sing it, he advised me not to think about the melody, but to imagine how Nami Matsushima would sing her song. In my interpretation, it's not one Nami, but six Namis that were singing it in each chorus. The B-side of that single is called 'A Woman's Spell', and I think that's a wonderful song too.

S!: Who were your influences as a vocalist?
MK: I can't read musical notes, so I begin by reading the lyrics first and then interpreting them. I think of the interpretation of the lyrics as a play. Rather than singing along with the melody and following the rhythm, I do it with the feeling of a play. The melody will come later. I think that each actor or actress has a different way of taking the time to pause between words, depending on their sensibilities and way of expression. When it comes to songs, the intervals are already determined by notes so it's a difficult task to create my expression of the lyrics along with the sound. I don't really have a particular vocalist who has influenced me.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NIKKATSU CORP

***Stray Cat Rock: Machine Animal*, 1970; the next three albums; Meiko enjoys a ciggie**

"[Quentin Tarantino] asked me to shake his hand, but when I shook hands, he wouldn't let go of my hand until he left the room. Even though our hands were sweating, he didn't let them go!"

S!: There's a kind of sadness to the songs on most of your albums. Was it a conscious move to match your film characters?

MK: I myself wonder why I was forced to sing such dark songs. I honestly wonder why all the songs that I used to sing day in and day out are so dark and similar. But the lyrics are different, so I sang while interpreting each difference.

S!: The exception from that period was the album *Sareyo Sareyo Kanashimi No Shirabe*, on which the music sounds happy…

MK: Masakatsu Suzuki, the producer and director of that album, said to me, "When I met you, I discovered that you were completely different from the image I had from your film roles." I had a kind of image that my films had given me, like an outsider or someone who wasn't really cheerful and was very dark. So he said, "If I were to express and create an image of you in my music, it would be *Sareyo Sareyo Kanashimi No Shirabe* (Go away, go away, melody of sorrow)."

At that time, Mr Suzuki had just got married and had a baby. I remember that he came to see me with his cute boy. I was really surprised to find out later on that he's a singer-songwriter now! He was in his 40s and he said to me, "My father used to compose songs for you and I've been listening to them for a long time. Now it's my turn to make an album just for you." Ten songs on this album had been written for me.

That's how a baby who was born while his father was making 'Go away, go away, melody of sorrow', grew up and came to me 40 years later bringing me an album called *Tsuioku* (*Remembrance*) that he wanted me to sing.

S!: That album was your first new music in many years. How was the experience of recording it with Masakatsu Suzuki's son, Shinichiro?

MK: His son said, "These are not the songs that my father made for you. I made the lyrics for you based on my own images." You'll understand it when you hear it, but it's completely Meiko Kaji. It's worth listening to and comparing the two albums.

He is a singer-songwriter and a rock singer. When I told him that I couldn't sing hard rock, he cheekily said, "Yes, I know." When I listen to the songs he made, all of them were full of poetry and melody. We didn't have much budget, so we had to do it in a short space of time. He told me to listen and study by myself first, so I practiced all the songs. Then I entered the studio, which was so small I could not even stretch my arms. After the nine songs had been sung, he brought the guitar for the last song called 'Actress'. I sang along with his guitar and recorded it. We finished in one hour and 18 minutes. It was very short. It's been a long time since I've released an album, so I was very happy to be able to create music with a different atmosphere. The rhythm and groove were really good and suited me. I realised once again how much fun it is to sing!

S!: Your performance in *Lady Snowblood* was a huge influence on Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill* films and he used your music on their soundtrack. How did that feel?

MK: It was a bolt out of the blue! I'm terribly sorry but in fact I didn't know his name. The director, staff and actors were scheduled to come to Japan to promote the *Kill Bill* movie, and one of the terms of the contract was for him to meet me.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TOHO CO LTD

Meiko in her iconic, defining appearance as Lady Snowblood, 1973

At that time, I was filming for a TV drama series. It was very difficult to get out of the shoot even for a day. But the person in charge of *Kill Bill* promotions in Japan said that if even one of the contract parts didn't happen, none of them would come to Japan. I was told that one floor of the hotel had been rented out, and that magazines, television, and media were preparing, and that since the date was approaching, I had no choice but to talk to the TV producer about getting a day off.

I talked to the producer about the reason why I had to participate in the promotion visit. He asked me who the director was, and he was taken aback and simply said, "I'm a big fan of his, of course, you can go." Only then did I realise that the director was world-famous. I just wondered, what did I do to deserve all this fuss?

During the day, I met with the director (Tarantino) in the hotel room and we talked about various things. I thought it would be rude to meet him without knowing anything about it, so I watched the movie before meeting him. When I met him, I gave him my impressions of the movie and thanked him. He asked me to shake his hand, but when I shook hands, he wouldn't let go of my hand until he left the room. Even though our hands were sweating, he didn't let them go!

He is such a charming person. It seems that he was really happy to meet me. Surprisingly he'd even watched movies that I had forgotten about. He's a real film geek. When he was studying film as a student, he worked part-time at a video rental store, where he watched many movies.

S!: What are your thoughts on having five of your albums reissued around the world?

MK: It's really thanks to Matt at the label Wewantsounds that I've been able to do this, and I hope that it will spread and become something fun. I really enjoy singing now.

S!: Do you have any plans to release new music?

MK: I haven't decided, but I've received several offers. We did a live show in Tokyo at the same time as the album release (for *Tsuioku*).

We didn't have much time to rehearse, but back when I was in Nikkatsu, I sang stage greetings with an orchestra in the background, so it wasn't difficult at all. It was a live venue with a capacity of 800 people and it was a huge success. I was so happy to see an audience came to see us. I had a lot of fun on the stage.

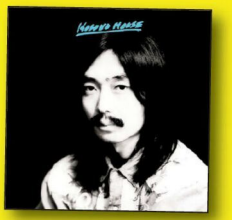
We also performed at a venue called Billboard Osaka. At that show, there were many people in the audience from overseas. There must have been people who came to Japan for this day, and fans left letters. One of them said, "I got a ticket for this concert as a reward for working hard. I will always pray for you in Istanbul." That's what it was like. I do not know the sender's name and address, sadly, so I am sorry that I could not reply, but thank you very much. From now on, including the release of the albums overseas, I am truly grateful. I will play and sing until I die. I will never retire.

Hajiki Uta is out now on Wewantsounds. Further reissues will follow

Yellow Magic

Five other Japanese '70s pop acts you need to hear

Haruomi Hosono



One of Japan's most influential musicians, Haruomi Hosono's career has taken in numerous styles. Beginning in 1969 as a member of psych-rock collective Apryl Fool, he next co-founded Happy End, whose hugely successful, native-sung albums like '71's *Kazemachi Roman* helped persuade his fellow countrymen that pop music needn't be slavishly rendered in English. Beginning with '73's folkish *Hosono House,* his '70s solo career took in diversions into exotica ('78's *Paraiso*) and India-focussed ambient collages ('78's *Cochin Moon*). He remains best-known as a co-founding member of Yellow Magic Orchestra, whose vibrant synth-pop, as heard on *Yellow Magic Orchestra* ('78) and *Solid State Survivor* ('79), made them global pop stars.

Akiko Yano

Renowned for her keening vocal style, sublime piano skills and singular way with melodies, Yano gained fame in her native country with her 1976 debut *Japanese Girl*, a brilliant melding of Japanese folk music with swamp-rock recorded in LA alongside Little Feat. Diversions into soul and funk followed before a period of collaboration with Yellow Magic Orchestra (whose keyboard player Ryuichi Sakamoto she would later marry) precipitated a change in direction. She utilised them as a backing band on two superb electropop-tinged albums, '80's *Gohan Ga Dekita Yo* (Dinner's Ready) and '81's *Tadaima* (I'm Home).

Maki Asakawa

An iconic figure of the Japanese underground, Maki Asakawa's music was as shadowy and enigmatic as the grainy black & white photos that adorned her albums. Her debut effort *Maki* (1970) and its follow up *Maki II* are both excellent examples of *avant-garde* folk and pop (the latter featuring a groovy, George Harrison-influenced take on the Hare Krishna devotional song 'Govinda'). But it was on third studio effort *Blue Spirit Blues* ('72) that she established the direction she would become best known for, as a unique interpreter of slow blues and jazz. Further classics like *Uramado* ('73) and *Maki VI* ('74) followed.

Tatsuro Yamashita

Tatsurō Yamashita began his career with soft-rock band Sugar Babe before beginning a successful solo career which straddled a variety of forms of breezy AOR, typified by brilliant craftsmanship and a penchant for Beach Boys-esque vocal harmonies. Early efforts like *Spacy* ('77) demonstrated his affinity with jazz-funk before records such as *Moonglow* ('79) and *For You* ('82) helped establish the City Pop genre which would dominate the '80s Japanese pop landscape. A frequent collaborator, he's often found on wife Mariya Takeuchi's music, including producing her City-Pop anthem 'Plastic Love'.

Taeko Ohnuki

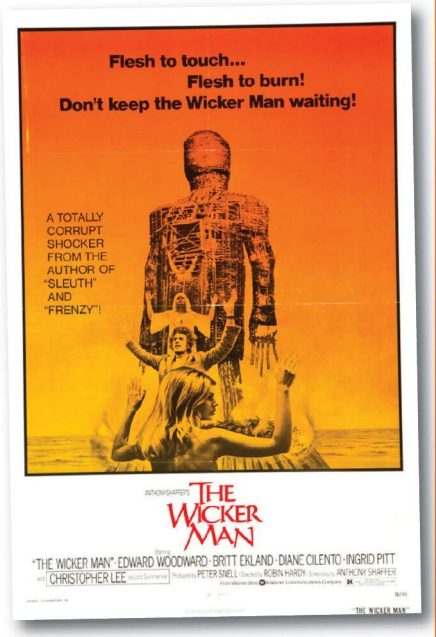
Yamashita's Sugar Babe bandmate Taeko Ohnuki also enjoyed a fine solo career. Assisted by a stellar lineup including Haruomi Hosono and Ryuichi Sakamoto, her second album *Sunshower* ('77) is an irresistible melding of funk, jazz-rock and pop that has become hugely collectable in recent years. Later albums like *Romantique* ('80), *Cliché* ('82) and *Copine* ('85) saw her delve into *techno-kayo* synth-pop while indulging her obsession for all things Français.

Take The Flame Within You

As the 50th anniversary of *THE WICKER MAN* is celebrated – not with a human sacrifice – but with a one-night-only solstice screening and deluxe Blu-ray bundle, **MARCO ROSSI** reconsiders the incredible soundtrack to this much-loved and much imitated folk-horror milestone

One of the many abiding ironies surrounding *The Wicker Man* is the fact that its beautifully apposite, supportive and vividly illustrative songs and musical cues should have been devised not by a sage, super-annuated Scottish homunculus in a thistle loincloth, coaxed from his cave by a trail of porridge oats, but by an urbane New Yorker. The 39-year-old Paul Giovanni, for it was he, was brought on board in July 1972 and displayed a consummate, informed yet intuitive understanding of the soundtrack requirements which commands respect to this day.

Burn, baby, burn. Diane Cilento as Miss Rose



Giovanni enlisted the aid of *Wicker Man* associate musical director Gary Carpenter – at that time, a recent graduate of London's Royal College Of Music – to assemble a band capable of interpreting his vision with the requisite combination of cannily unobtrusive expertise and authentic, grainy feel. To this end, Carpenter sought out fellow Royal College Of Music graduates and multi-instrumentalists Michael Cole and Peter Brewis, also recruiting three musicians from his then-current folk band Hocket: violinist Ian Cutler, guitarist Andrew Tompkins and percussionist Bernard Murray. The ensemble, frequently topped and tailed by Giovanni himself on guitar and vocals, initially awarded themselves the collective name of Lodestone, but latterly changed this to Magnet when it was discovered that another band called Lodestone were already out there working the seam.

Magnet's not inconsiderable achievement was to deftly slide classically trained diligence under the door and hide it within the roughhouse textures and intimate instrumentation of Giovanni's trad-folk-orientated score. (There is of course the small matter of the dry, *Melody Nelson*-esque rock interlude of 'Cave Chase', reportedly added at film company British Lion's request; but we'll let them have that.) Between them, Carpenter, Brewis and Cole supplied jaw harp, ocarina, recorders, concertina, fife, bassoon and – egad! – Nordic lyre, as well as the more commonplace harmonica, piano and bass guitar, and the cumulative effect of all of this is no less than the complete suspension of disbelief. One becomes convinced that the music in the film is generated by actual Summerislanders who are privy to some secret knowledge, some innate *stickiness*, passed down through timeless bloodlines.

More to the point, the music is so inextricably intertwined with the warp and weft of the film that it is as much a part of the action as the action itself. I'm making the broad assumption here that you've seen the film, haven't you? Haven't you? On the comprehensively unlikely off-off-chance that you somehow haven't seen it but are still reading this effluvium – God bless and preserve you – the plot can be briskly super-shrunk like so. Virginal Bible-chewing policeman visits Hebridean island to investigate report of missing girl. Islanders turn out to be earthy, knowing sensualists in thrall to obscure beliefs, and "missing girl" scenario turns out to be total fabrication intended to lure "holy fool" policeman to his sacrificial doom in the titular wicker man, thereby appeasing the pagan gods and salvaging a hitherto barren harvest.

From this deceptively simple synopsis emerged, in '73, a flawed gem: beset with piddling inconsistencies, shabbily mishandled upon release, but a gem nevertheless. (I'm choosing to ignore the whole vexatious topic of the 2006 Neil LaBute remake. Under earnest advisement from any number of respected sources, I haven't seen it for fear that it would taint my enjoyment of the original. One wouldn't plunge one's head into a pan of boiling chip oil, because this would in all probability compromise one's love of chips.)

First and foremost, and irrespective of budgetary concerns, *The Wicker Man* is a quality product. Without wishing to add any heat to the contentious to-ing and fro-ing which continues to dog the film among its surviving principals, it strikes this writer that all concerned did a bang-up job. Anthony Shaffer's screenplay thoughtfully, intelligently and rigorously establishes the means by which a belief system pre-dating Christianity can credibly persist into the present day, with dreadful consequences. Robin Hardy's direction is remarkably sure-footed for a debutante, and both Harry Waxman's cinematography and Seamus Flannery's art direction are subtly masterful. If all of the worthies mentioned above, or any combination thereof, expressed significant differences of opinion during filming and long after the event, then this merely underscores the unusual passions which *The Wicker Man* has always engendered.

The cast members, meanwhile, contribute performances which are – for the most part – simply beyond reproach. Edward Woodward's central characterisation as the ill-fated Sergeant Neil Howie is a perfectly pitched depiction of embattled stolidity and outraged incomprehension. When I first saw the film, as a 13-year-old whose Catholicism had yet to lapse, I was chilled to my singlet by the notion that Howie's faith couldn't save him. Watching the film now, the bleak terror of its sacrificial end sequence remains undiminished, but I can see that as a traumatised teenager, I had clearly missed the significance of the

UNEARTHED MERCH

Brighton-based ethical clothing company TSPTR has teamed up with StudioCanal to present an offering on the 50th anniversary of *The Wicker Man*. The TSPTR *Wicker Man* collection explores the planned but not executed range of promotional goods that were to accompany the film's initial 1978 US videotape release by Media Home Entertainment. A series of promo t-shirts were planned, to be sent to video stores along with posters in an effort to push rental sales of the lost classic. The plan was subsequently scrapped and none of the designs were ever made...until now. It is time to keep your appointment with *The Wicker Man*!

Shindig!: When did you first come across the unused merch from 1978?
Russ Gator: We'd asked for access to the entire StudioCanal *Wicker Man* archive which contained a lot of production photos, advertising paraphernalia from the various releases, and also a bunch of stuff they'd accumulated while searching for additional footage when they were putting together The Final Cut edition. Among this were some memos and design sheets from Media Home Entertainment who put out the first videotape release in the US in the late '70s. These were related to their promotional campaign for the release which was subsequently scrapped.

S!: What appeals about the designs?
RG: The designs were very much of the era (which we love) and especially evocative of promotional goods of that time. I'm also a big John Carpenter fan and collect '70s/80s Carpenter movie promo t-shirts, so the *Wicker Man* designs were very much in a similar aesthetic. These t-shirts were usually made as giveaways for video store employees to wear to promote the movie, most examples would have a cool graphic on the front and the studio name and release date on the reverse. Kind of like an extension of the movie poster medium.

S!: Your band The Evening Sons covers 'Willow's Song' too.
RG: Yes. I've always loved the soundtrack, it's hugely important to the overall effectiveness of the film, so we wanted to do a heart on sleeve homage. The vast majority of 'Willow's Song' covers out there are fairly close to the original, so we decided to take it in a different direction with dual female and male vocals and a lot of fuzz. It'll be available as a free download for those who wish to hear it. (See the video on our site.)

S!: How did the collab with StudioCanal come about?
RG: Well, we were in a meeting discussing a different project with them and started talking about our all-time favourite movies, I said *The Wicker Man* was one of mine and they told us there was a 50th anniversary 4k restoration in the works. This led to a different conversation after which they asked us to make a range of clothing for the anniversary. We like to think it was cosmic alignment.

As told to Jon 'Mojo' Mills

One lucky subscriber will be drawn this issue to win the full TSPTR range. *See page 9 for details*

***The Wicker Man*'s music composer Paul Giovanni and friends perform 'Gently Johnny' in the film; scenes soundtracked by 'The Tinker Of Rye', 'Willow's Song', 'Fire Leap' and 'The Hobby Horse'; Britt Ekland, Diane Cilento and Christoper Lee give it some welly**

"WELCOME, FOOL"

Five mad rumours about *The Wicker Man* and its soundtrack, as heard in Dorset pubs in the '90s, and related by **MARTIN RUDDOCK**

The Wicker Man was banned shortly after its theatrical release in 1973 for being too shocking for public consumption

Tucked away as a supporting feature to Nic Roeg's *Don't Look Now* at the time, the truth of the matter is that *The Wicker Man* wasn't banned, it was just very difficult to see anywhere until its mainstream VHS release in 1990. The banned rumour made for a better story though, and no doubt helped shift a few illicit off-air copies at a local comic shop, who mainly specialised in under-counter video nasties and seventh generation bootleg episodes of *Doctor Who* recorded in Australia.

Fool rating: Way off.

The original print of _The Wicker Man_ was savagely cut by censors

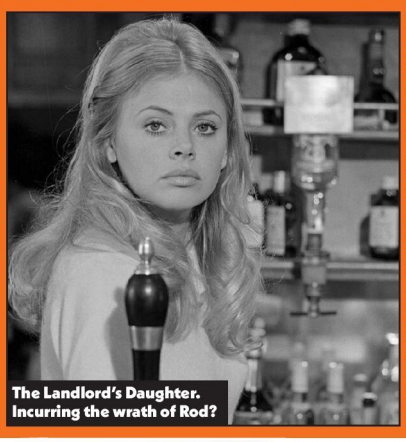
Partly true, but the cuts to Robin Hardy's original version were made by British Lion for timing reasons, not by censors. Most of *The Wicker Man*'s nudity, its denunciation of the church and its shocking ending was left intact. B-movie King Roger Corman probably suggested hacking out long chunks of Christopher Lee banging on about apples.

Fool rating: Partial credit

The film was suppressed by Rod Stewart, who didn't want the public to see girlfriend Britt Ekland in the nude in _that_ scene

It's true that Britt didn't want to appear fully naked as she was pregnant at the time, requiring either one or two "arse doubles", but she was never even filmed fully nude in the first place, and apparently didn't meet Rod until 1975. Also, according to fellow Faces Ian McLagan and Kenney Jones, Rod was often reluctant to stump up for a round of drinks at the time, so it's highly unlikely he'd have bribed a distributor to bump *The Wicker Man* to a B-feature or bury the offcuts under the M3.

Fool rating: Fool on the Hill



The Landlord's Daughter. Incurring the wrath of Rod?

David Bowie sings on 'The Landlord's Daughter' (hic), honest

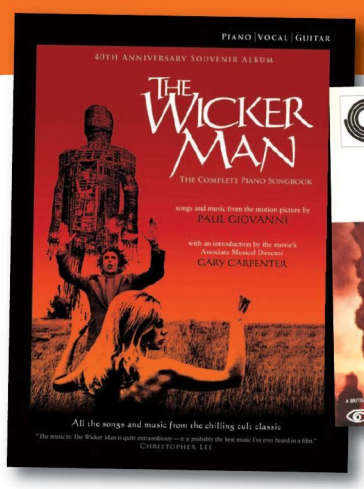
"You know who sings on the 'Landlord's Daughter' song? Bowie. He's on it because he was mates with Lindsay Kemp." This one was a stretch, to say the least. That said, listen to the re-recorded version of the song from Gary Carpenter's tape with Magnet replacing the cast's vocals (released in 2002) at around 1:13. A coincidence? Or was the originator of this rumour simply just really hammered?

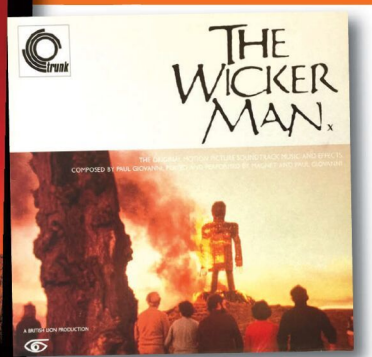
Fool rating: Crash course for the ravers

The film is cursed!

This one came up a lot, probably mixed up with a) On set tales from the fraught shoot of *The Exorcist* b) A lot of cider. This lacks any foundation at all, even in gossip. Unless of course the curse of *The Wicker Man* is on the viewer to endlessly rewind the 'Willow's Song' sequence, drunkenly speculate about it in pubs, obsess about every detail of every version of the film and its soundtrack and let it infiltrate your consciousness... oh, hang on.

Fool rating: King for a day





Sheet music and Trunk Records' 1998 soundtrack excavation

"**Magnet**'s not inconsiderable achievement was to deftly slide classically-trained diligence under the door and hide it within the roughhouse textures and intimate instrumentation of **Giovanni**'s trad-folk-orientated score"

scene's conflicting moralities. Howie wasn't "going to his reward", but to someone else's reward entirely. The beaming denizens of Summerisle, blissfully swaying as they communally bellow (a deftly rewritten version of) the traditional air 'Summer Is A-Cumen In' while Howie and a menagerie of animals burn before their eyes, appear if anything to have transcended conventional morals altogether. Their joy stems not from slavering bloodlust, but from the pragmatic application of, as they understand it, a means to ensure a bountiful harvest.

Equally as memorable is the celebrated scene in which Howie's essential decency takes a buffeting courtesy of Willow MacGregor, the mythically libidinous "landlord's daughter", whose attempted seduction of Howie from the other side of his bedroom wall in Summerisle's Green Man inn has passed into cinema legend for any number of reasons. Not least of these is the episode which Allan Brown indelicately refers to as "stunt arse" in his excellent book *Inside The Wicker Man*, whereby actress Britt Ekland, who was playing Willow, agreed to the required nudity in principle but refused to be filmed naked from behind as she was several months pregnant and, as Robin Hardy recalled, thought that "her arse looked like a ski slope".

A body double – or, if you will, "botty" double – was hastily procured, much to Ekland's lasting displeasure, but listen: bum japery aside, the scene *really works*. Ekland's portrayal of Willow is a career-best achievement, a finely judged balance of guile and guilelessness. Woodward is also outstanding in this scene, lonely and tormented but ultimately resolute (and thereby, ironically, proving himself worthy of sacrifice); but the key ingredient in creating an appropriately bewitching mood is Paul Giovanni. 'Willow's Song' is spellbindingly beautiful, a siren song to out-lure them all. Rachel Verney dubbed Ekland's voice for this, and depending on whose testimony you believe, jazz singer Annie Ross is said to have dubbed all of her dialogue as well. (As far I can gather, she definitely did, or definitely didn't. Or might have done. Or not. You have to stoically take this kind of muddying of the waters on board when researching *The Wicker Man*.)

True fans of the film quite rightly rue the excision, in the common 87-minute version, of the entire 'Gently Johnny' sequence, which not only contains one of Giovanni's prettiest songs – mellifluously sung by the man himself – but which also establishes in more detail Willow's role on

"And from that grave there grew a tree." Summerisle's young folk dance around the maypole; the 2023 Final Cut poster

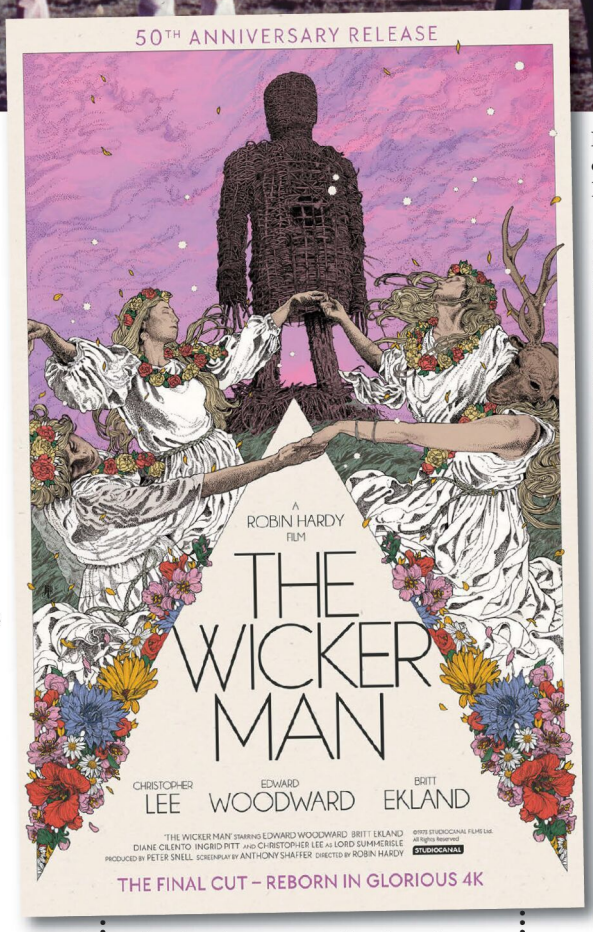
Summerisle as "The Goddess Of Love in human form", solicitously deflowering a young man and in so doing initiating the first stirrings of Howie's temptation. (The 'Willow's Song' sequence denotes his *second* night on the island in the uncut print.)

And how exactly did we get this far without mentioning Christopher Lee? His magisterial, unsettlingly avuncular turn as Lord Summerisle is another career-best performance in a film fairly bristling with them: even if, as Allan Brown impishly points out, Lee reportedly regarded Doctor Catheter in *Gremlins II* as his next-best role. It is a part tailor-made for Lee's natural grandiloquence and glowering presence, but it is hardly the scenery-chewing thesp-fest that it is unkindly described as in some quarters.

Mind you, if you were going to chew any scenery, the film's shooting locations in Skye, Ayrshire, Plockton and throughout Dumfries and Galloway would surely be in the vanguard of locales in which to whip out a knife, fork and napkin. These locations boast a thriving tourist trade off the back of the film's burgeoning cult status; and if you think I'm going to sneer at those who make the pilgrimage, well, ask me how I feel when I get back from making my own pilgrimage in the near future. (I actually worked with a good deal of pride as a sub-editor on the *Galloway Gazette* for a short while, but to my dismay the office I worked from was a good 70 miles or so away from the source, in Dalkeith.)

God, I've nearly come to the end of this ramble and there's still so much to recommend about the film: Lindsay Kemp as will-o'-the-wisp landlord Alder MacGregor; Hammer horror habituée Ingrid Pitt; Walter Carr – known and beloved to all Scots of my generation as Dougie in the BBC series *The Vital Spark* – in a whimsical but haunting cameo as the schoolteacher who leads the singing of the exquisite 'Maypole Song'; and, of course, the money shot to end all money shots, as the wicker man's flaming head slides away to reveal a terrifyingly indifferent sun… But you know all this already. If you crave infinitesimal detail and limitless debate, slope across to an internet near you, where the film casts an appropriately giant shadow over whole sections of the web.

This article was abridged from the out-of-print Shindig! *bookazine* Witches Hats And Painted Chariots: The Incredible String Band And The 5,000 Layers Of Psychedelic Folk Music



The Wicker Man 50th Anniversary Collector's Edition is out on 4th September via StudioCanal and available to pre-order now

THE VIEW FROM THE TOP

In 1966, 18-year-old pop prodigy CAT STEVENS emerged from Tin Pan Alley to claim the charts as his own. Those singles – sophisticated, bombastic, yet grounded in the everyday – became high points of '67's glorious soundtrack, while his songs became timeless hits for others. But the pop business took its toll on Cat, both professionally and physically – he nearly didn't make it to 20. As he celebrates his 75th birthday this month, this exclusive interview finds YUSUF ISLAM reflecting on those early years with MARTIN RUDDOCK

Somewhere between 'I Love My Dog' and 'Kitty'. An exhausted Cat Stevens plays the pop star game, 1967

"The chairman of Decca listened to 'I Love My Dog' and said, 'My boy, you are a genius.'" Cat breaks through in 1966

March 1967, and *Rave* magazine's Dawn James is trailing along Carnaby Street with a dandy young pop star, trying to get some quotes as they walk. Cat Stevens, 18, isn't particularly forthcoming ("Do you have a very busy life now?" "Yer." "Are you scared of failing?" "No.") – but opens up somewhat once they reach a café.

Cat's had two smash hit singles in the last six months, with a third on the way. He's cool and assured, with exotic good looks inherited from his Greek father and Swedish mother. His first album *Matthew And Son* is just hitting shelves. His songs are becoming hits for other artists. He's probably going to be quite wealthy, quite soon, suggests James. What will he do with all the money? "Not a lot," he answers. "All I really want is to build a temple on a hillside in Greece and live in it."

"I went to a Roman Catholic school but I was Greek Orthodox, so a temple would have suited me at that time," chuckles Yusuf Islam when we mention this early nod to his spiritual side. Speaking to *Shindig!* over Zoom from his home in Dubai, it's May 2023 and he's preparing for a triple threat of a celebration. This July, he turns 75. His first all-original new album as Yusuf/Cat Stevens (the slash is an "also", not an "either-or") *King Of A Land* is due for release on George Harrison's revived Dark Horse label. And, he's excited about making his debut at this year's Glastonbury, in the Sunday legends slot. "I think it's time. I've matured to the point where I've got a catalogue which is pretty envious," he says with a grin. "Many people would not go back to 1967 and 'The First Cut Is The Deepest' and 'Here Comes My Baby', so all that is there to present again at Glastonbury, which I'm really excited about."

It's a time both to reflect and look forward for Yusuf. Cat Stevens famously walked away from music after converting to Islam in the late '70s, before making a welcome surprise return in the new millennium. We're here today to discuss his first incarnation, the ambitious, saturnine pop star of the late '60s who was almost wiped out by Tuberculosis and returned as arguably *the* songwriter of his generation. Having made his peace with his past, what, we wonder, does Yusuf make of the teenage Cat Stevens today? "He was pretty much a go-getter," muses Yusuf. "Where I was going to go in life was unforeseen…"

Born in 1948, Steven Demetre Georgiou grew up above his father's restaurant on Drury Lane, at the nexus of London's theatre district and within whiffing distance of the music business's Soho engine room. Music was everywhere at an early age. As a youngster he'd climb on the restaurant roof and listen to the sounds of the West End drifting up. From age 15 he hit the folk club circuit under the name Steve Adams, wielding an £8 Eko acoustic guitar. A talented cartoonist, he briefly enrolled in Hammersmith Art College, but the lure of music was too strong. "I was living next to Tin Pan Alley so my first hop would be straight into the music business, picking up a guitar to write songs. That was the beginning."

By any standard, Steven was off to a good start, employed as a staff songwriter at the tender age of 17 on the strength of one of his earliest songs: a little number called 'The First Cut Is The Deepest', which he sold for £30. "I was punting around and I got myself signed to a very duff agency that belonged to EMI," he recalls. "And then they lodged me with Ardmore & Beechwood as an in-house songwriter. I'd come up with two or three songs a week, trying to get my songs placed and covered. That's where I met Kim Fowley. He gave me some scribbled lyrics on a piece of paper and I ended up writing the music for 'Portobello Road', which ended up as the B-side of my first single."

The teenager found it slow work at Ardmore & Beechwood, and his songs were hard to pigeon-hole. "I was also influenced by musicals, so I wrote from a slightly awkward songwriter's angle," he

"THAT WAS MY PURPOSE OF WRITING, TO BECOME A COMPOSER, NOT JUST A SINGER. NOT MANY PEOPLE COVERED MY SONGS. I REALISED I HAD TO DO IT MYSELF"

Cat prepares to go on stage; the first three chart-busting singles and 1967 debut album *Matthew & Son*; *Fabulous 208* magazine favoured a Cat cover

points out. "I did admire Leonard Bernstein maybe more than Lennon & McCartney. I was into that storytelling. That was my purpose of writing, to become a composer, not just a singer. Not many people covered my songs. I realised I had to do it myself, and that's where Mike Hurst came in."

Stevens took matters into his own hands in Summer '66, visiting ex-Springfields man Hurst with his older brother David – introducing himself as Cat Stevens, after a girlfriend commented on his striking "cat-like" eyes. Hurst had just got into production, doing odd jobs for Andrew Loog Oldham at Immediate, and working with American engineer Jim Economides, who'd attracted Hurst's attention with a newspaper ad falsely promoting himself as "The Beach Boys Producer". Economides didn't rate Cat's songs, but Hurst was wowed by 'The First Cut Is The Deepest' and 'Here Comes My Baby', and recorded a four-song demo with him. With no interest in the songs at first, and with Economides abruptly returning to America under shady circumstances, a glum Hurst prepared to follow him, accepting a job at Vanguard in the States.

But Cat was persistent, visiting Hurst again. "At which point," Hurst later recalled, "he played me 'I Love My Dog' and that was that." "'I Love My Dog' was really my breakthrough," says Yusuf. "When he heard that song, he just knew this was something different. He gave up his journey, his migration to America, just to do my single."

Determined to cut the song, Hurst snuck Cat into the studio via an elaborate ruse, negotiating a fake session for Manfred Mann singer Mike D'Abo with Decca's Dick Rowe. "I took the finished article in and confessed to Dick Rowe that I had not told the truth," Hurst later recalled. "He went mad, but I said, 'Okay, fair enough, but have a listen to the record'. He got the CEO of Decca, Sir Edward Lewis, down. The chairman listened to the recording and said, 'My boy, you are a genius.'" Cat signed to Decca and inked a producer-manager contract with Hurst, and the guerrilla recording of 'I Love My Dog'/'Portobello Road' became the second release on Decca's new Deram imprint on 30th September.

Opening with Cat's distinctive gut-bucket guitar picking, 'I Love My Dog' is a baroque-pop masterwork, with Alan Tew's arrangement and Hurst's big sound evoking The Beach Boys and Bacharach. It also provoked a stern letter and a bill from the lawyers of jazz woodwind legend Yusef Lateef. In acknowledgement of the song's significant debt to Lateef's '61 composition 'The Plum Blossom', it now carries a co-credit for Lateef.

With 'I Love My Dog' scaling the charts, Cat suddenly had a full diary of light entertainment TV appearances, radio sessions and press to deal with. A whirlwind trip to Europe led into a mini-tour over Scotland and the North of England and a series of shows at Paris Olympia in December before joining the bill at Georgie Fame's *Fame In '67* shows at Brian Epstein's Saville Theatre.

There was barely time for a cup of cold coffee and a piece of cake before 'Matthew And Son'/'Granny' followed on 30th December. A driving tale of wage slaves, named after a furniture store near Cat's parents' home, pirate radio airplay helped propel it to #2 in the charts, not that it needed much help.

During January '67 Cat took root on radio and TV, ricocheting between *Top Of The Pops*, *Crackerjack*, *Saturday Club*, *Monday Monday*, *Look North* and *Guitar*

Cat sets off on tour with unlikely playmates The Jimi Hendrix Experience, The Walker Brothers (Gary pictured) and Engelbert Humperdinck, April 1967; tour poster; late '67/'68 singles and second album *New Masters*

"MY IMAGE WAS STILL STUCK WITH ME. THE HAROLD DAVISON AGENCY HAD TOM JONES, ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK AND ALL THAT. I WASN'T QUITE ABLE TO PUT ON MY JEANS YET"

Club over a dizzying fortnight. ("[It was] totally embarrassing when I was doing *Top Of The Pops* and you see some old pictures of me in a long kaftan looking a little bit like Donovan," says Yusuf today.) He also took up residence in the pages of the likes of *Record Mirror, Disc* and *Fab 208* – requiring hacks of the time to come up with endless punning feline bylines. That same month the freshly Brian Poole-less Tremeloes hit #4 in the UK with their cheery version of 'Here Comes My Baby', flattening out the song's air of melancholy into a blast of party pop.

With a gruelling schedule and a debut album to complete, the young star hit the clubs in downtime. Soon he was letting off enough steam to loosen the wallpaper. According to a '90s interview with Hurst, the producer once frog-marched his drunken protégé out of popular hangout The Bag o' Nails. Cat and Hurst's creative relationship soon became strained, with the older man dominating in the studio and employing a crack team of London sessioners to fill out his wall of sound, with Cat sometimes confined to vocals.

"I feel that I was given a chance, but not enough of a chance. So, for instance, 'I Love My Dog' is me playing guitar," says Yusuf. "The first notes are like, me. 'Matthew And Son' went in another direction, went more keyboard-y, and Nicky Hopkins was there to do that. Big Jim Sullivan was the guy who played the guitar on most of my tracks in those days. I did a few. Not enough."

The *Matthew and Son* album remains an eclectic paisley-pop classic. Cat's own rendition of 'Here Comes My Baby' (with volume pedal licks from Sullivan) is joyous, while the charming bossa nova of 'Bring Another Bottle Baby' is one of his finest early songs. Elsewhere there's a faint hint of psychedelia on 'When I Speak To The Flowers' and grit to the gutsy 'Baby Get Your Head Screwed On'. The mellow 'Hummingbird' and yearning 'Lady' also show his more sensitive side, while 'The Tramp' displays a social conscience.

Released on 10th March, it found its way quickly to #7 in the UK charts. Two weeks later, Cat's chart and airwave dominance was hammered home with a brand-new single. 'I'm Gonna Get Me A Gun' was catchy, wry and trigger-happy, reaching #6. Written in more innocent times, it angrily threatened "You better get ready to run" to "people who put me down" and had disappeared from Cat's live set by '70. Dubious message aside, it's great pop and certainly provided an excuse for The Harold Davison Agency to send Cat out on TV dressed as a cowboy. A week later, in perhaps the definitive example of the unhinged mid-60s package tour bill, Cat went out on the road for several weeks with The Walker Brothers and The Jimi Hendrix Experience.

Meanwhile, a second third-party hit was brewing as Hurst recorded 'The First Cut Is The Deepest' with PP Arnold at Oldham's behest for Immediate. "I remember jumping up and down in the studio when we finished it, going, 'That's a hit! That's a hit!'", the producer told Lois Wilson for *Record Collector* in 2021. Hurst was soon in demand as a producer for other acts looking for "the Mike Hurst sound".

As Hurst's stock grew, Cat's envelope-pushing new single 'A Bad Night' emerged in July. On the surface a song about being left hanging by a girlfriend, its upbeat, shape-shifting arrangement dripped with dread. Full of unexpected tempo changes, bursts of phased strings and backwards cymbals, it was neither pop nor psychedelia, falling between two stools in the high summer of '67, but reached #20 nevertheless. "It's got some great arrangements in there," says Yusuf. "It's got my Bernstein spark in that one. Towards the end I was trying to do something more like The Yardbirds, but they were doing it so much better than the session men were," he laughs. "The message of that song was quite prophetic in some ways. I was heading for my downfall, and I predicted it very clearly in my lyrics."

Despite Hurst's inventive production on 'A Bad Night', Cat was going off "the Mike Hurst Sound" by the time of the sessions for second album *New Masters*. Hurst's bombastic production reached new heights, dialling the big sound of *Matthew And Son* up to 11. "I think it suited many of the songs, but then other songs lost their core, the emotion was lost," reflects Yusuf today. "I had session musicians playing and it was orchestrated, and someone else did the arrangements. Although Alan Tew, I must admit, was a genius. I love what he did. 'I Love My Dog' is a major milestone in arrangement at that time. There are some really good arrangements. But I felt that my soul was getting lost somewhere in the mix."

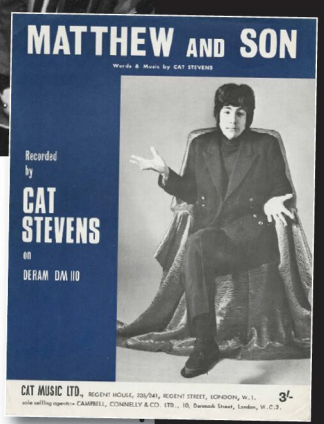
On the rocks with Hurst, Cat went to court in late '67 to contest his contract, arguing that he was underage when he signed it. He was also angling to produce

THE WORK'S NEVER DONE

Cat Stevens' 'Matthew And Son' remains one of the most visible – and successful – entries in the British late '60s phenomenon of labour songs. Inspired by Ray Davies' working-class character vignettes of 1966, an explosion of songs concerning the plight of the little man followed. ANDY MORTEN clocks in

Kitchen sink realism and Summer Of Love gaudiness may seem like unlikely bedfellows but that didn't stop a plethora of singles springing up in the wake of Cat Stevens' ode to the working-class. Without doubt the most shameless 'Matthew' clone is Peter Lee Stirling's June 1967 Decca B-side '8:35 On The Dot', which not only cops the message but also the click-bass intro, soaring chorus and Cat's vocal nuances.

Mike Proctor's £400 August single 'Mr Commuter' ("You're like a computer") epitomises the "little man on the train" ethos, as does Two And A Half's sublime Simon & Garfunkel-indebted October A-side 'Suburban Early Morning Station'. John Carter/Robin Shaw/Micky Keen vehicle The Ministry Of Sound (featuring a pre-Sweet Steve Priest) actually pre-empted 'Matthew' on July '66 single 'White Collar Worker'; their '67 'Time And Motion Man' demo remained unreleased for 26 years.



East London psych-rockers Bulldog Breed derisively dismissed 'Folder Men' as "bowler hatted briefcase clowns" on '69's *Made In England*, while South London combo The Actress's February '69 single 'Good Job With Prospects' reads like a careers advice appointment. The French Revolution may have been a Québecois act but that doesn't preclude 'Nine Till Five' – the English translation of their '69 single 'Et La Terre Tournera' – from honourable mention here.

The most enduring and towering entry here is Rupert's People's 'Reflections Of Charles Brown', the July '67 single (repurposed from their earlier outing as Sweet Feeling), on which the working-class melancholy of *Spring And Port Wine* ("another week's HP to find") meets the grandiose neo-classicism of 'A Whiter Shade Of Pale' to exceptional effect.

Even star turns got in on the act: see The Searchers' November '67 gem 'Second Hand Dealer' and Amen Corner's 'Bend Me Shape Me' flipside 'Satisnek The Job's Worth'.

In addition to at least 10 songs about doctors and four about policemen, numerous vocation-specific cuts loom large. Cue Kaleidoscope's 'Mr Small The Watch Repairer Man', Chocolate Frog's 'Butchers And Bakers', Bowie's 'Please Mr Gravedigger' and Rodney Bewes' 'Meter Maid'. The Kinsmen's 'Glasshouse Green, Splinter Red', The Attack's 'Neville Thumbcatch' and John's Children's 'Strange Affair' eulogise the green-fingered. Finally, The Knack's '(The Man From The) Marriage Guidance And Advice Bureau' and The Walham Green, East Wapping Carpet Cleaning Rodent & Boggit Extermination Association's 'Sorry Mr Green', both of which were doomed not to make any radio playlist – too much paperwork.

Now, get back to it!

himself, having already produced a handful of 45s for other artists and recently hooking up with Brummie psych band The Yellow Rainbow, rechristening them Zeus. "They were great, very raunchy," says Yusuf. "It was fun for a while, but they didn't have the subtlety…some of my arrangements were really quite complicated and it didn't quite work." Cat's brief association with Zeus was captured on French TV, crashing through a thunderous 'First Cut' at Palais des Sports. "Yeah, it doesn't seem to end! That song seems to go on forever," laughs Yusuf. "We probably didn't have that many songs, so we extended it a lot." The *New Masters* sessions continued uneasily through the court case, with Dick Rowe stepping in to supervise the sombre 'Blackness Of The Night' in Hurst's stead. By the time the album emerged, Cat and Hurst had parted company.

New Masters was released in December, trailed by the groovy, driving single 'Kitty'. Underneath its cheery exterior, the new single had fangs – "The men on the block, they say I'm on the brink," snarks Cat – but only grazed the Top 50. The album didn't chart. Despite its blaring arrangements, *New Masters* is loaded with classic tunes. The charming, childlike 'The Laughing Apple', gentle 'I'm So Sleepy' and dramatic Western-themed 'Northern Wind' are superb – while 'Blackness Of The Night' features the first glimpse of the thoughtful acoustic troubadour of the '70s. There's also his own, impassioned take on 'First Cut'. Yusuf has mixed feelings about *New Masters* today but revisited some of his favourite songs with stripped-back arrangements for his 2017 album *The Laughing Apple*. "That was a good way to correct the mistake, or whatever," he chuckles.

The sleeve for *New Masters* featured a faux portrait of a brooding Cat in his Swinging London pomp. "I'm still dressed up in that kind of slightly Tom Jones-y gear," says Yusuf. "That photograph was taken by a friend of my brother, Kadi De Rakoff, in his flat in Battersea."

As '68 dawned, Cat hit the reset button with a remarkable new single. Released in February, 'Lovely City (When Do You Laugh?)' (produced by Decca staffer Noel Martin) was the sound of a young pop star snapping back at the Swinging London bubble and its "stony people", with galloping Buddy Holly rhythms and snaking fuzz guitar. Flipside 'Image Of Hell' hinted that all was not entirely rosy in Cat-land. It failed to chart, but he was clawing back control of his career. So far, so good.

"But then life tests you," says Yusuf. "And all of a sudden after about one year of high pop existence I was thrown on my back and landed up in hospital."

In February '68, Cat was admitted to hospital with Tuberculosis and a collapsed lung. It would prove to be a long recovery. Granting press interviews from his hospital bed, he remained the consummate pop star, posing with a newly purchased Gibson E335, mentioning potential modelling work and that he was writing songs for "a horror movie". Despite his nose-diving chart fortunes, there was also talk of a third album. But something had changed, forever. A cartoon drawn by Cat was published in *Disc & Music Echo*. Startlingly it features Harley Street Nursing Home on fire, with a line of sinister-looking men waving contracts. Cat is front and centre, a "TILT" caption over his lungs. His brush with mortality led to some big changes. He got into Yoga, read up on Buddhism and began to look within and without. "That was the turning point, where the me *now* began," he says. "Although I had lots of questions before that, it just became much more distinct after that experience because I knew that life was finite, in this world. So that began my journey of spirituality, and the hand-in-hand journey of spirituality and music."

Cat's contract with Deram was also very finite. Still not match fit, he returned to the fray in October for a new self-produced single arranged by library supremo and former Manfred Mann guitarist Mike Vickers. 'Here Comes My Wife' was a slight return to orch-pop, and a sour swipe at a fictional wife ("She haunts me / She don't even want me," sighs Cat). The superb B-side 'It's A Supa (Dupa) Life' took the cynicism of 'Lovely City' to new levels. Combining big showbiz horns with growling fuzz, it took pops at flying saucers, the Paris riots and capitalism alike. Speaking to *Record Mirror*, Cat remarked that he had 30 songs ready to go ("enough for two good LPs") and was working on a narrative for the first. "I'd like to get some kind of story running through one side."

ON THE ROAD TO FIND OUT

YUSUF ISLAM FILLS US IN ON NEW YUSUF/CAT STEVENS ALBUM KING OF A LAND

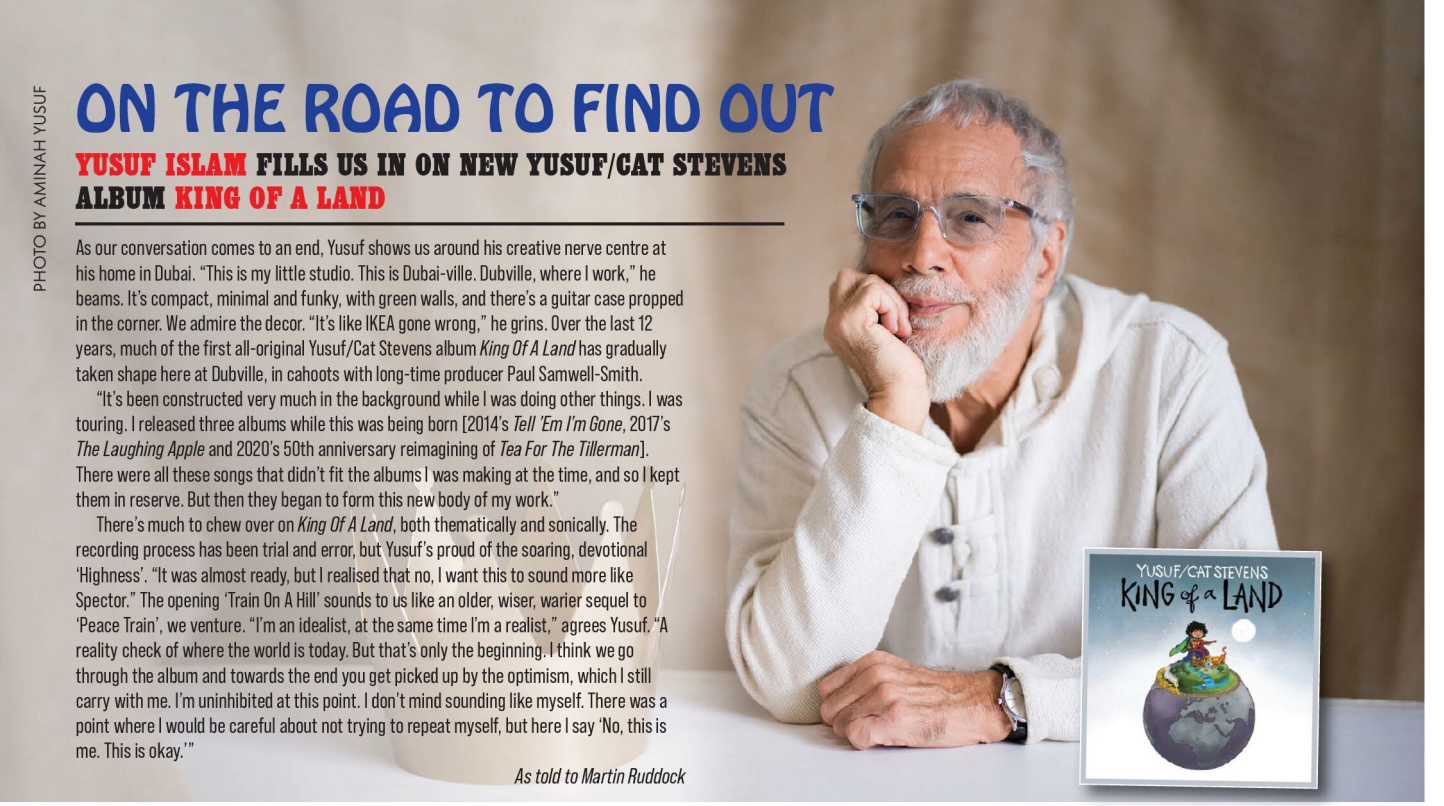


PHOTO BY AMINAH YUSUF

As our conversation comes to an end, Yusuf shows us around his creative nerve centre at his home in Dubai. "This is my little studio. This is Dubai-ville. Dubville, where I work," he beams. It's compact, minimal and funky, with green walls, and there's a guitar case propped in the corner. We admire the decor. "It's like IKEA gone wrong," he grins. Over the last 12 years, much of the first all-original Yusuf/Cat Stevens album *King Of A Land* has gradually taken shape here at Dubville, in cahoots with long-time producer Paul Samwell-Smith.

"It's been constructed very much in the background while I was doing other things. I was touring. I released three albums while this was being born [2014's *Tell 'Em I'm Gone*, 2017's *The Laughing Apple* and 2020's 50th anniversary reimagining of *Tea For The Tillerman*]. There were all these songs that didn't fit the albums I was making at the time, and so I kept them in reserve. But then they began to form this new body of my work."

There's much to chew over on *King Of A Land*, both thematically and sonically. The recording process has been trial and error, but Yusuf's proud of the soaring, devotional 'Highness'. "It was almost ready, but I realised that no, I want this to sound more like Spector." The opening 'Train On A Hill' sounds to us like an older, wiser, warier sequel to 'Peace Train', we venture. "I'm an idealist, at the same time I'm a realist," agrees Yusuf. "A reality check of where the world is today. But that's only the beginning. I think we go through the album and towards the end you get picked up by the optimism, which I still carry with me. I'm uninhibited at this point. I don't mind sounding like myself. There was a point where I would be careful about not trying to repeat myself, but here I say 'No, this is me. This is okay.'"

As told to Martin Ruddock

But TB had hit Cat harder than he was letting on, and he fell largely silent for eight months. There was no new album, but he was on a creative hot streak. Some songs were bluesy, like the withering, sarcastic 'Pop Star' and the gnomic, gutbucket 'Mona Bone Jakon'. Others were hushed and insightful, with a gentle wisdom. During this time, he also found a new muse in Warhol starlet and model Patti D'Arbanville – although Patti's long-distance modelling trips abroad put the relationship under strain, in time inspiring several of Cat's most memorable songs.

On 23rd February '69, Cat played a rare gig supporting The Who at The Roundhouse. Perhaps conscious of the headliners' live firepower, he went electric for the occasion, bringing his Gibson. His set that night remains a mystery. "I had my little Fender amp and I'd written some really wonky songs… it was a blip," Yusuf told *Guitar World* in 2021. "It's a very vague period in my memory and I can't quite remember how I did it, but I emerged out of the darkness of that episode and gradually tried to get back," he says today. "I had one last fling with Mike Hurst, and the last song that I did was actually one of the most beautiful tracks I think we'd done together."

'Where Are You'/'The View From The Top', a one-off reunion with Hurst, was released in June '69. It's a lovely tale of loneliness sung in a noticeably deeper, growlier voice, yet it sounded like Cat had been wheeled directly from hospital to deliver it. "I loved that track. It was an indication of where I was going," says Yusuf. The claustrophobic flipside found Cat pondering his identity ("Why can't I stop forgetting myself? / Why am I always trying to be like somebody else?) before signing off with a berserk burst of screaming fuzz guitar. The single tanked. "I think it was kind of an attempt to write another hit, to get back into music from my isolation period," ponders Yusuf. "But my image was still stuck with me. The Harold Davison Agency had Tom Jones, Engelbert Humperdinck and all that. I wasn't quite able to put on my jeans yet. And that of course all changed very quickly when I met Chris Blackwell."

In summer '69 Cat was released from Decca and mulled his options. "I realised that the singles weren't happening, so I went back to my original ambition, to be a composer of musicals. That's when I met Barry Krost, who was involved in theatre and had writers and actresses and actors in his stable. And that's where we came up with the idea of a musical about The Russian Revolution. Amazingly. Foolishly," he laughs.

Stevens and new manager Krost spent months looking for funding for the ambitious *Revolussia*, but the only real bite came from Island boss Blackwell. He wasn't keen on the musical but sat up and took notice of a striking new song from the score, 'Father And Son'.

With Blackwell dangling a new deal at Island, Cat signed in late '69 and parked *Revolussia*. Written in the age of *Hair*, *Tommy* and *SF Sorrow*, the musical remains a tantalising "what if?". Some of the songs originally intended for the musical would surface across his classic four-album run at Island. Did Yusuf ever consider releasing it as a concept album? "No, no, never. It was connected to the story. I've got a few demos of those songs and they're very tailored towards the narrative. But one of them happens to be 'Father And Son', which became a universal anthem for so many fathers and sons and generations to come, and which have been."

The move to Island would be a personal and creative sea change for Cat, whose spare acoustic demos were the cornerstone of a new, stripped-down sound. There was creative freedom, and trusted, simpatico collaborators in producer Paul Samwell-Smith and guitarist Alun Davies. He even got to provide his own album art. In stark contrast to *New Masters*, his debut for Island, *Mona Bone Jakon,* would feature a painting of a dented dustbin, a visual pun on Cat's "bone". The now-bearded, dressed-down star appeared in a hazy shot on the rear sleeve.

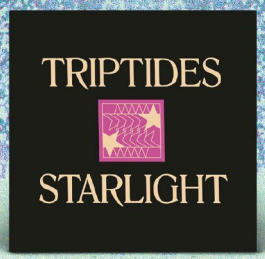
Sonically crisp, and full of songs to die for, *Mona Bone Jakon* is a triumph, from the haunted Ennio Morricone madrigal of 'Lady D'Arbanville' (about Patti, who was away in New York on a modelling job) through to the gentle, wise 'Lilywhite'. There were such riches of material in reserve that even 'Father And Son' was parked, making its recorded debut later on *Tea For The Tillerman*. In the space of a year, Cat was well on his way to greater stardom, and already on a deeper journey.

Reflecting on his early years, Yusuf remains philosophical. "I did write a few odd songs that didn't have much meaning," he laughs. "I just wanted to get a song out. Most of them had a lot of meaning in that they logged my position on the path towards where I was going, and that's why I think they kind of still stand up today because there was an honesty about them. That's clear."

With many thanks to Yusuf Islam and Dave Palmer

King Of A Land is out now on BMG/ Dark Horse

CALIFORNIA CURATED COOL



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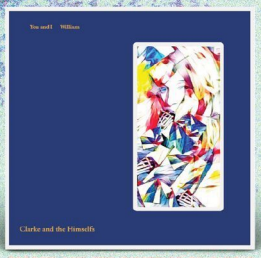

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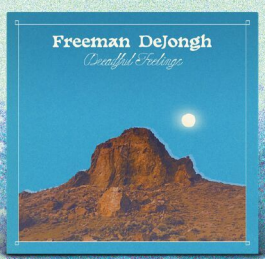

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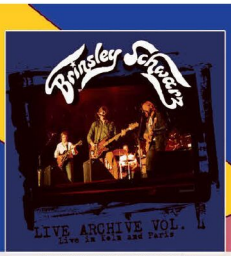

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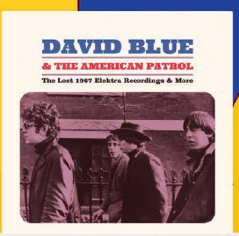

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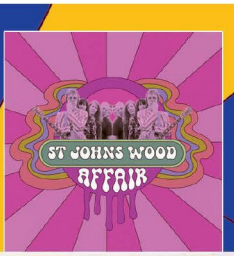

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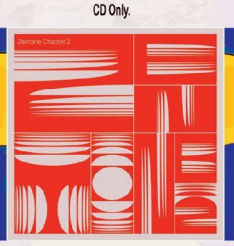

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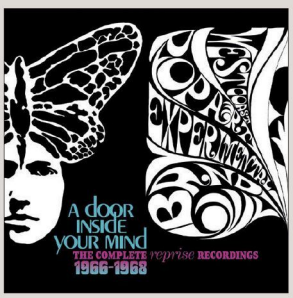
What A Transparent Day

BEN PHILLIPSON sees beyond the good and evil into the defining work of "the ultimate cult band"



THE WEST COAST POP ART EXPERIMENTAL BAND

A Door Inside Your Mind: The Complete Reprise Recordings 1966-1968

★★★★★

GRAPEFRUIT 4-CD BOX SET

With problematic elements becoming evident towards the end of their recording career, The West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band's reputation rests most comfortably on the three albums recorded for Reprise during an eventful 18-month run from 1967 into '68. Thanks to the Grapefruit label's sterling work, this four-disc set leaves no stone unturned, presenting the entirety of the group's work of the period in the best possible light, crucially in both stereo and mono mixes.

Emerging from collaborative home recording and writing sessions by Michael Lloyd and brothers Shaun and Danny Harris, this precociously talented crew of LA teenagers attracted the interest of the significantly older Bob Markley. Initially their benefactor, Markley positioned himself into the group as a percussionist of no fixed ability. In a somewhat sinister move, his subsequent copyrighting of the group's name gave him veto over the band, prompting Lloyd's departure during the sessions for *Part One*. That album remains both a classic and a disjointed oddity. Among many highlights are the opening, heavy waltz of 'Shifting Sands', the major/minor melancholy of 'If You Want This Love' and the timeless 'Transparent Day'. Nothing here is less than intriguing, but Markley's presence ('Leiyla', '1906') does feel more like a drunken uncle crashing the party. That aside, long-time listeners should be directed to the long unavailable mono mix of *Part One*. Gaining power and life, the jangle of 'Here's Where You Belong' reaches near-ecstatic levels, while the heartbeat on 'I Won't Hurt You' feels better integrated into the song. Whether these mixes become your "go-to" is down to personal preference, but the set benefits from having the options.

Vol 2 is likely fewer people's favourite WCPAEB album, Markley having moved himself centre stage. Given his lack of musical aptitude, the group interpreted his lyrical ideas to write often inspired material and, while his counter-culture rallying feels disingenuous, 'Suppose They Give A War And No One Comes', in particular, remains effective. More worryingly, the first signs of his overt interest in significantly younger girls appear on two of the songs here, though Dan Harris' 'Delicate Fawn' actually sounds a great deal more innocent once you realise Markley is all but absent. At its best ('Smell Of Incense', 'Tracy Had A Hard Day Sunday'), the group delivers on worthy material and, despite its faults, it's possibly a more concise and better sounding record than its predecessor.

With Markley kept in check at crucial points, *A Child's Guide To Good & Evil* represents the ever-changing group at their peak, the magic in its sleeve art somehow spilling onto tape. 'Eighteen Is Over The Hill', and 'As The World Rises And Falls' may be their most beguiling moments, while 'In The Country' seemingly invents Belle & Sebastian 30 years early. A fourth disc containing surviving artefacts from the Reprise era works as an alternate version of that third album, with fascinating, notably different versions and mixes of (almost) the entire record. In addition, 'I Feel Sorry For You', a Dan Harris-penned outtake from *Vol 2*, is among the set's highlights: a genuine new discovery worthy of the group's name.

It's less surprising that Reprise dropped the group after their finest hour, more that these records were made at all, let alone effectively bankrolled by Frank Sinatra. Essentially a studio creation, The Pop Artex were unique to the extreme: a melding of empathetic musicians and a very large ego. *A Door Inside Your Mind* feels like both a perfect testament and a good place to lose yourself, just as long as you know the way out.

"Long-time listeners should be directed to the long unavailable mono mix of *Part One*. Gaining power and life, the jangle of 'Here's Where You Belong' reaches near-ecstatic levels"

Ron Morgan, Shaun Harris and Bob Markley photographed for the cover of *A Child's Guide To Good & Evil*, 1968

THE AMERICAN DREAM
1969 Rundgren Demos
★★★★
GUERSSEN LP

The American Dream was a Philadelphia band that knocked around the city in various forms in the second half of the '60s, playing original, blues-inflected powerpop with a difference. Most of their songs seemed to have so many ideas, sections and concepts that a lesser batch of songwriters would have made nine songs out of each. Their lone LP is known for being the first outside production by fellow Philadelphian Todd Rundgren, shortly after he left The Nazz. It's loaded with sweet, clangy, chunky guitar classics and no one outside of Philadelphia ever got to hear the thing.

This collection of pre-album demos and songs that didn't make the cut is not quite a "revelation" – because everything on here sounds like an alternate take rather than a demo, fully formed and ready to blow your face off. And there are five songs you've never heard, all pretty darn marvellous.

Mike Fornatale

THE ATTACK
Strange House
★★★★
GUERSSEN LP

Spanish label Guerssen is on a roll right now, its ceaseless dedication to excavating and representing all manner of lost and neglected vintage gear in rude health. *Strange House* collects UK mod/psych heroes The Attack's post-Decca recordings into something resembling "the album that might have been". All but one track has been released before, but shorn of the dubious extras that blighted previous editions these 1967/68 recordings sound more potent than ever.

With singer Richard Shirman the only constant, and guitarist John DuCann leading the quartet into heavy waters, it's easy to see why Decca balked at the idea of releasing riff-driven monsters like 'Magic In The Air', 'Freedom For You', 'Feel Like Flying' and the title track; commerciality is not the name of the game, it's all about power chords, chugging rhythms and ominous lyrics. Du Cann took three tracks with him to shape power trio Andromeda. The hard flipback sleeve and notes by our own Jon 'Mojo' Mills ensure that this one is the keeper.

Andy Morten

BENT WIND
Sussex
★★★
GUERSSEN LP

There was a time when this album by the Toronto psych-rockers was the focus of feverish pursuit by record hunters. Only a few hundred copies were pressed on its first release in 1969. When one turned up, it could change hands for thousands of dollars.

Now here it is, remastered for a new vinyl release in a hard cardboard sleeve with illustrated liner notes including an interview with singer and guitarist Marty Roth. At a more affordable price, it can be reassessed unencumbered by its former lost legend status. *Sussex* is a solid album that leans towards the bluesy hard-rock that bludgeoned the music scene of the late '60s. That sound is best showcased on the dark tale of murder that is 'Riverside', but there are some other intriguing songs with a lighter psychedelic touch, such as 'Look At Love' and the opening section of 'Hate', before the song builds to something that more ominously echoes its title.

Clive Webb

MATT BERRY
Kill The Wolf
★★★★
ACID JAZZ 2-CD/2-LP

In a terrifying signifier of the relentless march of time, musician/actor/baritone-voiced MoneySuperMarket man Matt Berry's fourth album of psychedelic-prog-folk *Kill The Wolf* is now reissued in an expanded form in celebration of its 10th(!) anniversary, replete with all the tracks from the *Wolf Out-Takes* and *Kill The Wolf* EPs that appeared at the same time as the original release (plus a bonus 45 for those who pick up one of the first 500 blood-spatter coloured vinyl versions).

When first released, some listeners viewed this and Berry's previous album *Witchazel* through comedy-coloured lenses; after all, surely the guy from *Toast Of London* was only joking when he attempted to wed Rick Wakeman-style pyrotechnics to a *Blood On Satan's Claw* vibe. Fortunately, Berry wasn't joking, and his music stands the test of time, *Kill The Wolf* sounding today like a highpoint in a folk-psych revival that still shows no signs of slowing down. Long live the *Wolf*.

Thomas Patterson

Azure Like It

DAVID BLUE
David Blue
★★★★
David Blue & The American Patrol
★★★
BOTH HANKY PANKY/MAPACHE LP

For as long as most of us remember, there's been talk of a "new Dylan" and if the name David Blue registers at all, it's likely in that context since he was one of the first of these. Working at The Gaslight Cafe in when it mattered most, he gained attention performing in Greenwich Village, becoming part of a stable with emerging singer-songwriters like Phil Ochs and Eric Andersen. But while his contemporaries were gaining plaudits and attracting covers of their material, Blue was somewhat late out of the gate, his self-titled debut finally appearing on Elektra in 1966.

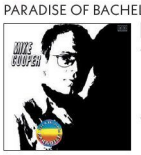
There's an undeniable whiff of *Highway 61 Revisited* about that record, which from our vantage point is no bad thing. It's even there in the sleeve photo, Blue seemingly channelling Bob, tousle haired, pre-amphetamine burnout. The material is mostly oriented towards a loose Butterfield Band style in hard-panned stereo with Paul Harris's organ and celeste bringing further similarities with Dylan's "Wild Mercury Sound". But if some of the material feels indebted, there is a distinctive tenderness to a song like 'Midnight Through Morning', while the album's one overt epic 'The Street' is a poetic vignette that offers suggestion of a real emerging talent.

Elektra evidently felt Blue was worth preserving with but dropped him after rejecting the '67 follow-up album, finally released here as *David Blue & The American Patrol*. It's easy enough to see why; much of its mix of Spoonful-style good-time music and vaudeville is pleasant enough, but Blue lacks the vocal personality of a John Sebastian to bring the songs truly to life.

The real stand-outs here are more downbeat: '23 Days In September', is an eerie minor-key masterpiece that would form the basis of Blue's subsequent Reprise album in '68, while 'Scales For A Window Thief' finds him tapping into a similarly introspective vein to great effect. These are both richly annotated vinyl releases and, with only a limited run, interested parties should dig in while they can.

Ben Phillipson

MIKE COOPER
Life And Death In Paradise + Milan Live Acoustic 2018
★★★★
PARADISE OF BACHELORS CD/LP

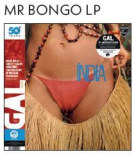


Mike Cooper is spawned from a breed of truly original artists who have steadfastly followed their own path. Mainly recognised these days as an *avant-garde* jazz experimentalist, Cooper originally started out as a country/folk-rocker, which by 1974 he was ready to jack in. That is until he was convinced to make one last singer-songwriter album.

Life And Death In Paradise lands somewhere between Dylan, prime Van Morrison and early days Springsteen. But it's the ingenious inclusion of the South African rhythm duo of enigmatic drummer Louis Moholo and bassist Harry Miller, plus free jazz saxophonist Mike Osborne, that really propels this record in a new direction and sets Cooper on the path to the next phase of his career. As if the reissue of the album isn't enough, it's accompanied by a previously-unreleased 2018 solo gig at which the maverick artist came full circle – ditching his sonic adventures in favour of a stripped-back acoustic set.

Sarah Gregory

GAL COSTA
India: 50th Anniversary Edition
★★★★
MR BONGO LP



With Astrud Gilberto's passing coming hot on the heels of that of Rita Lee and indeed the great Gal Costa herself late last year, suddenly it feels like all the remaining female stars in the Brazilian firmament are in a rush to leave the building. Thus, the deluxe 50th anniversary edition of *India*

Continues over

arrives as a timely tribute to one of the most flamboyant figures and distinctive voices of the Tropicália movement.

Censored by Brazil's military government because of the album's provocative sleeve artwork, *India* seamlessly blends MPB, jazz, Tropicália and Nordestino folkloric influences. Gal is accompanied by, among others, Gilberto Gil, Arthur Verocai, Rogerio Duprat and Tenorio Jr. Majestic throughout a stellar tracklist that includes the slow-burning title cut, the sublime 'Volta', 'Passarinho' and 'Pontos De Luz', Gal's post-Tropicália masterpiece closes with, of all things, a perfectly understated reading of Antonio Carlos Jobim's bossa standard 'Desafinado'.

Grahame Bent

DAVID JOHN & THE MOOD

Diggin' For Gold: The Tea Chest Recordings

★★★

CHERRY RED CD

Three singles in two years before melting away in early 1966, this Lancashire quintet left a mere shadow on British R&B history, but the rarity of their Vocalion and two Parlophone 45s have ensured some latter-day crate-digger enthusiasm.

Thanks to the excavation of Joe Meek's *Tea Chest Tapes*, David Wells has compiled a 22-track disc from just seven songs. Rubbing shoulders with The Beatles (it was David John who promoted their first BBC TV appearance), Jagger, Gomelsky, being mistaken for David Jones & The King Bees, and being produced by Meek suggests history could have turned out otherwise on a different day. The fact is they weren't quite good enough, their best being the title track and a cover of Bo's 'Pretty Thing'. The whole is not without charm and the odd spark, and it's great that this level of archaelogy is being conducted, but this is for devotees only.

Vic Templar

DEL JONES / DEL JONES' POSITIVE VIBES

Court Is Closed

★★★★

NOW-AGAIN RESERVE 2-LP

The latest beneficiary of Now-Again's mission to rescue and reissue lost, passed over and impossibly rare musical treasures is Del Jones' remarkable *Court Is Closed*. A way ahead of its time expression of militant Black consciousness straight off the streets of early '70s Philly, the album was initially released as a limited-edition private pressing on Hikeka Records in 1972.

The uncompromising blend of radically switched-on lyrics and the accompanying funk, jazz and Latin influences heard on *Court Is Closed* cast Del Jones as a fellow spirit of contemporary Black-American socio-political pioneers Melvin Van Peebles, Gil Scott-Heron and The Last Poets. Also included on this handsome double edition is *Positive Vibes*, the "revised" version of *Court Is Closed* that appeared in '74 complete with overdubbed horns and additional tracks. Which version hits hardest is ultimately for you to decide.

Grahame Bent

THE EXPLODING HEARTS

Guitar Romantic

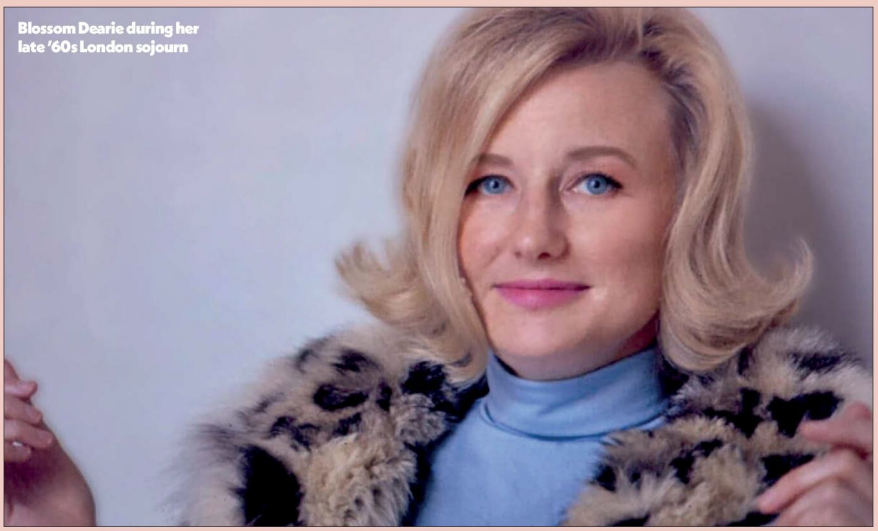
★★★★

THIRD MAN CD/LP

Portland, Oregon's The Exploding Hearts released their first and only album in 2003. Some three months later, as they were driving home after a show, frontman Adam Cox, bassist Matt Fitzgerald and drummer Jeremy Gage were killed in a car accident. A reissue of the splendidly titled *Guitar Romantic* reminds us what an electrifying group The Exploding Hearts were.

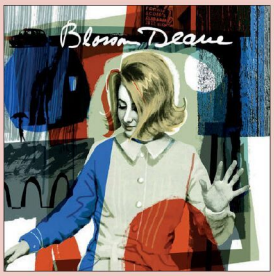
There's an everlasting force at the core of their songs, which reveal all the fierce melodicism of powerpop and all the bite of punk (filtered through typically Northwest noisiness). Although the all-killer tracklist makes it hard to pick a favourite, 'I'm A Pretender' feels like rock in its purest form, still sneeringly thriving in the new millennium and still irresistibly anthemic 20 years after its release. Bonus tracks include a new mix of it as well as of 'Busy Signals' (B-side to single 'Modern Kicks') and 'So Bored', which appeared on 2006 compilation *Shattered*.

Camilla Aisa



Blossom Dearie during her late '60s London sojourn

Sounds So Sweet



BLOSSOM DEARIE

Discover Who I Am: The Fontana Years

★★★★

UMR 6-CD BOX SET

By the mid-60s, American singer/pianist Blossom Dearie, famous for her soft, bubble-like vocals and understated keyboard touch, was in her 40s and in a career lull. Following a series of Verve albums, her 1964 one-off for Capitol, *May I Come In?* hadn't done particularly well and opportunities to further her recording career in America looked slight. With an invitation to perform at her friend Annie Ross's new club, she departed for the British capital and began her London period with a series of albums that would not only revitalise her career but also spotlight her own songwriting.

This deluxe, Abbey Road-remastered box set is a beautifully designed tribute to Dearie's UK rebirth, with each album presented on its own disc in an expanded tracklist, and two additional discs of recently discovered out-takes and extras. Dearie's first two gambits at Fontana were live albums. *Blossom Time At Ronnie Scott's* features selections that travel from the contemporary pop songbook (Mann/Weill's 'On Broadway') to Noel Coward (a convincing, poignant 'Mad About The Boy'); 1967's *Sweet Blossom Dearie*, recorded in the same venue and with a similar piano/bass/drums format, was notable for the debut of 'Sweet Georgie Fame', Dearie's irrepressible ode to the titular singer, and the first in a series of tribute songs she would write.

Dearie's two Fontana studio albums are entirely different beasts, pushing her further into pop. *Soon It's Gonna Rain* ('67) kept her piano-playing up-front and presented her as an accomplished interpreter of songs from musical theatre, the pop charts and bossa nova, with a small band and a chamber group (violin, harp, flute). *That's Just The Way I Want To Be*, on the other hand, featured nine of her songs, including the studio version of 'Sweet Georgie Fame' and Dearie's next tribute song, the whimsical 'Dusty Springfield'. Brian Gascoigne's orchestral arrangements are mostly sympathetic, with only 'Both Sides Now', clearly fashioned after the Judy Collins version, overly titivated.

The accompanying booklet is well written and does a fine job of anchoring Dearie's Fontana period within the context of her life and career.

Charles Donovan

THE FLAMIN' GROOVIES

Rockin' The Roundhouse

★★★

CLEOPATRA CD/LP

This album's title is a slight misnomer as the tracks contained within come from a number of sources. The bulk of the release is from the Roundhouse concert of 1978, but there are also selections from a '76 concert held at London's Imperial College and a couple of studio tracks including a Courettes mix of 'Shake Some Action'.

The Groovies always swam against the tide of what was considered to be hip at any given

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THE BEAT GOES ON...

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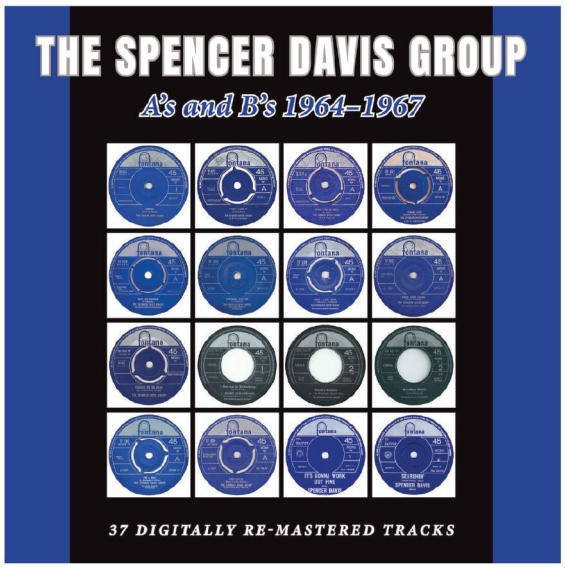
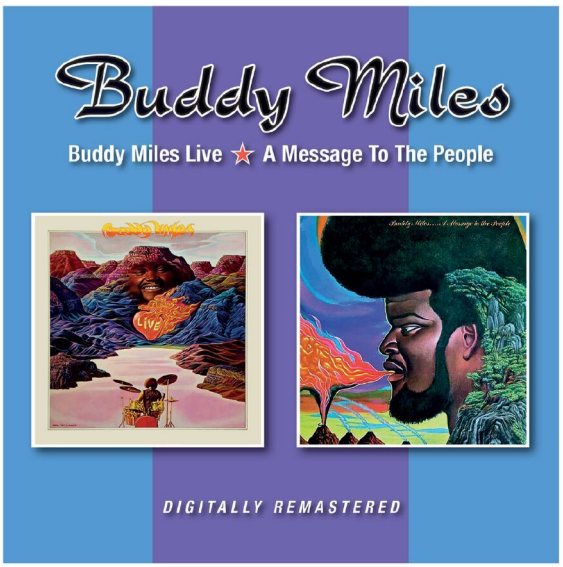
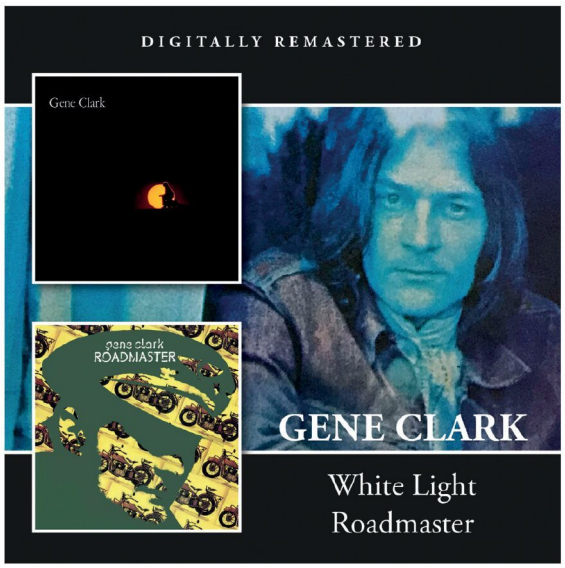


THE SPENCER DAVIS GROUP
A's and B's 1964–1967
BGOCD1492



BUDDY MILES
Buddy Miles Live / A Message To The People
BGOCD1493



GENE CLARK
White Light / Roadmaster
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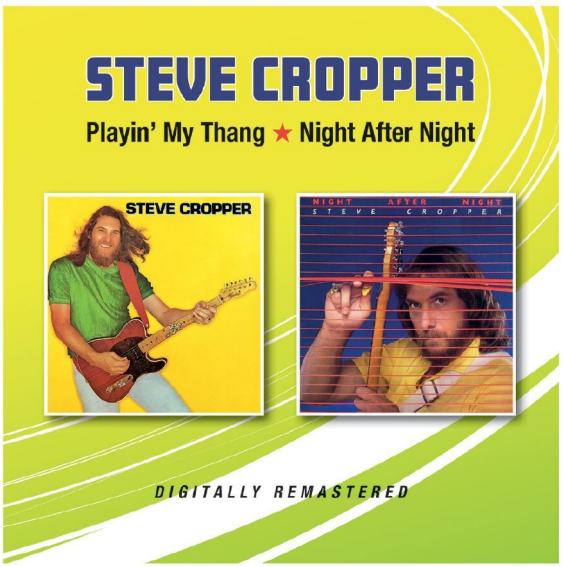

STEVE CROPPER
Playin' My Thang / Night After Night
BGOCD1495

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time and that attitude is showcased throughout their set list, covers of Cliff Richards 'Move It' and the Merseybeat of 'Please Please Me' and 'From Me To You' sit comfortably alongside their own powerpop tunes. Even the hopped-up swing-era boogie track 'House Of Blue Lights' gets a look in. The sound is rough around the edges but listening to pounding live takes of 'Shake Some Action' and 'Slow Death' makes this release a historically valid and entertaining document of the time.

Henry Hutton

FUCHSIA

Fuchsia

★★★★★

GUERSSEN LP

Like their namesake in Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast*, Fuchsia don't belong anywhere. It's progressive rock, but without the cliches or pomp: Tony Durant's recalcitrant vocals, reminiscent of Syd Barrett and anticipating post-punk's naked vulnerability, avoid the familiar mannerisms of the era. Violins and cello give a chamber-music feel, incorporating abrupt time changes and shifts in mood, from unhinged rants to pastoral loveliness, into a lush, complex song-suite, while the rampaging acoustic guitars and uncanny intensity occasionally recall Comus. But *Fuchsia* isn't a folk record either.

Despite its 1971 release date, this wonderful album arguably belongs spiritually to the late '60s: a grand psychedelic folly that includes both the multi-part surrealism of 'The Nothing Song' and gorgeous McCartney pastiche 'Me And My Kite'. Like Comus, *Fuchsia* is more than a band or an album: she's a haunting, enchanted entity in her own right, summoned magically into being and demanding your unwavering attention.

Ben Graham

Hard Rock Showcase

Four turn of the decade rock outfits, back from oblivion. **ELIAS HULK**. Great Name. Awful album cover. Production as rudimentary as the cover artist's ability. The drum solo halfway through track one hardly inspires confidence either. However, 1970's **Unchained** (★★, GUERSSEN LP) has its moments, with the witchy folk vocals on 'Yesterday's Trip' and the jazzy 'Been Around Too Long' demonstrating Elias Hulk's willingness to experiment beyond the hard rock brush that tarred them. Less effective is raga instrumental 'Delhi Blues', which would have reeked of hippy antiquity even in '70.

LEAF HOUND's **Growers Of Mushroom** (★★★★, REPERTOIRE LP) was recorded "live" in the studio in '70 and possesses an energy that still sparks. Opener 'Freelance Fiend' establishes some head-down boogie credentials, while epic 'Work My Body', raw-riffing 'Stray' and groovin' 'Sawdust Caeser' all proclaim a band that should have progressed beyond anonymity. Zeppelin and Free comparisons are fair, but it is worth remembering the Hound were contemporaries, not derivatives.

The band that recorded **ORANG-UTAN**'s self-titled one-and-only (★★★★, GUERSSEN LP) in '71 were actually called Hunter, their manager releasing it under a different name without their knowledge in anticipation of a bigger slice of a pie that never materialised. Happily, the album is as interesting as the back story. 'Country Hike' recalls a playful Traffic, and 'Slipping Away', all sloppy riffing and choppy time signatures, is a hard rock classic. Guitarist Mick Clarke's virtuosity soars across every track, while Nobby Clarke (no relation) possesses a classic, gutsy early '70s rock voice, all the more remarkable as he was missing a lung. Another howler of a cover, though.

As with all the above, **SAM APPLE PIE**'s **Second Helping** (★★★, SOMMOR LP) was recorded in '70, but unreleased until now. Song titles and credits have apparently been lost to those pesky mists of time, and while the record is thoroughly listenable, it sounds like an early '70s sampler as generic as the track titles, with 'Track 01' recalling the blues-boogie of The Edgar Broughton Band, 'Track 05' the early hard prog of Uriah Heep, and the trippy 'Track 08' evincing a band that had tried to get back to the country.

Peter Gallagher

GUILHERME COUTINHO E O GRUPO STALO

Guilherme Coutinho E O Grupo Stalo

★★★★★

MR BONGO CD/LP

Brazilian music continues to inspire and thrill thanks to the tireless effort of specialist labels dedicated to uncovering obscure gems and long-lost treasures years after they were first produced.

The latest gold nugget to undergo the reissue treatment is the highly sought-after digger's delight, *Guilherme Coutinho E O Grupo Stalo*. Originally released in 1978 on the little-known label Erla-Estudio Raulan, the combination of being based so far outside the established musical hubs of Brazil and Coutinho's untimely death in '83 inevitably led to the record's eventual plunge into obscurity. But make no mistake, this is a masterpiece that not only continues the Tropicalia tradition, but introduces jazz, MPB (the country's urban post-bossa nova take) and timeless songwriting – all of which makes for a fascinating, highly unique and incredibly addictive album. *Guilherme Coutinho E O Grupo Stalo* deserves to be mentioned in the same breath as the masterworks of his contemporaries and predecessors.

Sarah Gregory

NICK LOWE

Dig My Mood: 25th Anniversary Edition

★★★

YEP ROC LP+EP

Everyone's favourite crooning chameleon is back, sort of. Yep Roc Records is releasing a 25th anniversary reboot of Nick Lowe's *Dig My Mood* which includes one previously unheard studio track and four live performances from Tokyo in 1998. Originally released in '98, *Dig My Mood* didn't stick out strongly among Lowe's body of work; this anniversary edition lets us bask in his sultry sauntering.

Though there are some missteps, like 'Freezing', which copies the trajectory of the now-reviled 'Baby it's Cold Outside', or 'You Inspire Me', which sounds like Tony Bennett taking a nap, the album has some classics! Songs like 'What Lack Of Love Has Done', or the previously unheard 'I'll Give You All Night To Stop' show a nice penchant for grooving. The live songs are alright, if unnecessary (there's some heinous clapping), but Lowe's voice still manages to shimmer.

Tess Carges

THE MISSING SOULS

The Missing Souls

★★★★

DANGERHOUSE SKYLAB LP

Deluxe treatment of this defunct French ensemble's lone album first released in 2016. Now back on sale featuring different coloured packaging, an illustrated insert, remastered sound plus a few extra tracks not initially included.

Soul-infused garage-beat punk was the main inspiration for The Missing Souls' sound. In their ranks they featured lead vocalist and guitarist Ian Kapoudjian (who then went solo under the name Ian Kay) plus bassist and vocalist Zaza Sharps, subsequently reverting to Elsa after she moved to England, marrying Mike Whittaker of Thee Vicars and The Baron Four – the pair then forming The Jack Cades alongside octopus-armed Four drummer Mole Lambert. Whilst being an all covers album, the Souls nonetheless bring to bear their own exciting, highly personal touch, positively excelling across a slew of choice cuts, many of them familiar, such as 'You Just Gotta Know My Mind', 'Little White Lies', 'Shake, Shout & Go' and The Bruthers' *Pebbles* classic 'Bad Way To Go'.

Lenny Helsing

MYSTIC CHORDS OF MEMORY

Mystic Chords Of Memory

★★★★★

BIG POTATO LP

With Beachwood Sparks on indefinite hiatus, vocalist/guitarist Chris Gunst teamed up with Aislers Set keyboardist Jen Cohen in 2002 to produce the first of two records as Mystic Chords Of Memory. Away from the "cosmic cowboy" tropes that Beachwood fans may have expected, those recordings remain essential pieces of the jigsaw. Delicate, spiritual and appealingly homespun, MCOM made music that was perfect for late nights and early mornings.

There is real imagination at play, with 'Like A Lobster' and 'Last One' floating on subtle layers of violin, melodica and found sounds. 'Soul Through The Bullet Hole' is a delightfully woozy Money Mark-ish instrumental, while the ambience of the closing 'Pi & A Bee' recalls Bruce Langhorne's masterful *Hired Hand*. In terms of "indie-folk", Mystic Chords seemed to prefigure much of what was to follow, and it's first-time issue on vinyl feels entirely necessary.

Ben Phillipson

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO

Soho Radio

waxin' celluloid

It's business as usual for **THOMAS PATTERSON** as he hits the streets of NYC, stops off for a Satanic orgy and then blasts off into outer space

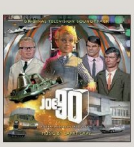
Record Store Day has been and gone but we kick off this month's soundtrack column with a trio of releases that deserve some post-RSD love. Canadian composer **GALT MACDERMOT** is best known for 1967 hippie rock musical *Hair*, but two years later he recorded the soundtrack to **Woman Is Sweeter** (★★★, NOW-AGAIN LP), a short documentary about fashion designer Yves St Laurent that's since been rinsed for samples by hip-hop artists like J Dilla and Busta Rhymes and is now reissued on vinyl with an impressive booklet stuffed full of pictures of the great man himself. Featuring Bernard Purdie and Idris Muhammed on drums, the music within is stripped back gear with a childlike sense of fun – playground funk if you will. Indeed, you could imagine many of these tracks soundtracking *Sesame Street* segments.

Speaking of kids' TV shows, next up is a classic of the genre: **Mr Benn: The Music** (★★★★★, BFS LP) by **DUNCAN LAMONT**. A blast of nostalgia for those of us of a certain age, the cartoon about a businessman heading off on adventures via a fancy dress shop comes with a delightful soundtrack played by session music greats like Harry Stoneham, Kenny Wheeler and Ken Baldock, and recorded at Olympic Studios in 1969, probably around the same time the Stones, Beatles and Hendrix were all knocking around (oh, to be a fly on the wall when Mr Benn bumped into *Let It Bleed*). This release sports the '69 sessions on one side and the score to an episode made in 2004 on the flip, pressed up on a picture disc designed to look like the pinwheel from the show's opening credits. This release sold out in a flash, but copies can still be tracked down, either online or via a shopkeeper who might appear as if by magic...

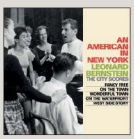
Another picture disc for our final RSD offering, albeit from a quite different genre. Four cuts from **JAMES BERNARD**'s score to 1968 movie **The Devil Rides Out** (★★★★, HAMMER/SILVA SCREEN 45) have been pressed on a pentagram-shaped 45 for the edification of all you horror aficionados/pentagram-shaped record lovers out there. Bernard was a master of the scary soundtrack, having composed countless scores for Hammer, and this one is particularly beastly, thrashing timpani and histrionic horns in service of tracks with names like 'Orgy Of Evil'. Satanic fun abounds.

To space with our next two. **Journey To The Moon And Beyond** (★★★★, SACRED BONES LP) collects cues composed by synth pioneer **MORT GARSON** for all manner of projects, including adverts, documentaries and the soundtrack to the blaxploitation soundtrack *Black Eye*. The centrepiece, however, is the soundtrack he recorded for the Apollo 11 moon landing, broadcast live on CBS in 1969. The styles within vary from deep funk to groovy lounge, but the most arresting are the cuts performed in Garson's instantly recognisable electronic style. As liner notes say, "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for Moogkind."

More space fun with **Space Is The Place: Music From The Original Soundtrack** (★★★★, MODERN HARMONIC 2-CD/3-LP) from **SUN RA & HIS INTERGALACTIC SOLAR ARKESTRA**. A beautiful behemoth of music from the Afro-futurist musician who shed his earthly name of Herman Blount to become the most out-there jazz musician of the 20th century, as demonstrated in a documentary about him made in 1972. Released on triple vinyl and double CD, this release contains the original score from the movie and the movie itself, but most interestingly, an entire additional album of offcuts called *The Mathematics Of The Altered Destiny*. A must for all celestial travellers out there.



Silva Screen have slowly been working their way through the Gerry and Sylvia Anderson archives, and now they reach a firm fan favourite in the form of **BARRY GRAY**'s music to **Joe 90** (★★★★, SILVA SCREEN CD), the 1968-69 marionette show about a secret agent schoolboy. As with all Barry Gray soundtracks, this is stellar stuff, Joe Meek-style pop meets Bernard Herrmann-esque orchestrations; but really we're here for that twanging, surf-pop opening cut, an original 45 of which would set you back a ton or so. All together now: "Der-der-der-der-der-der-der..."



Time for a Leonard Bernstein explosion. Impressive in scope, **An American In New York: Leonard Bernstein, The City Scores** (★★★★, ÉL 5-CD) is a box set from the always unpredictable él label that gathers up over 100 tracks from the legendary American composer, all thematically linked to New York City in some fashion, from the original cast recordings of musicals like *On The Town* and *West Side Story* to contemporaneous interpretations by artists such as Stan Kenton, Frank Sinatra, Blossom Dearie and Cal Tjader. It's an impressive set, almost overwhelming in its scope. A more accessible entry for those unfamiliar with Bernstein's work comes in the form of **ANDRE PREVIN AND HIS PALS SHELLY MANN & RED MITCHELL**'s **West Side Story** (★★★★, CRAFT RECORDINGS LP), the 1959 recording (two years before the film version) on which the future Mr Preview tackles tracks from the musical in a cool jazz style (his killer version of 'Maria' also appears on *An American In New York*). Pressed on beautiful heavyweight vinyl, this reissue sounds terrific, full of the promise of the American dream.

We close out with a pair of oddities. **The Flasher** (★★★½ REAL GONE LP) is the soundtrack to a 1973 porno recorded by a curiously named band called **POOL-PAH** in conjunction with future *'Escape (The Piña Colada Song)'* popster Rupert Holmes, reissued here for the first time ever. Mixing up psych, rock, soul, folk and even some Mort Garson-style electronica, it's a little bit funky, a little bit sleazy and a curio that's become a firm favourite of musicians like Beck and Wiz Khalifa. **Hey Folks! It's Intermission Time!** (★★★★, MODERN HARMONIC CD/LP) comprises 40-odd advertising jingles from the golden age of American cinema like 'Let's All Go To The Lobby' and 'Popcorn And Candy, Yum Yum'. Instantly evocative for readers across the Atlantic, most of these will go over the heads of us Brits raised on Kia-Ora and Butterkist ads but considering some of the pieces within come from the likes of Raymond Scott and even The Cyrkle (recording an ad for 7-Up), this is still worth the price of admission.

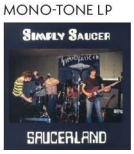
CHITRA NEOGY
The Perfumed Garden: A Hymn To Love
★★★
MODERN HARMONIC LP+BOOK

This has to rank amongst the more singular records to be released to critical acclaim in 1968. It was Chitra Neogy's take on a 15th Century text akin to *Kama Sutra*; back then Neogy, who is now a professor of film at NYU, felt that Western translations were tendentiously patriarchal. *The Perfumed Garden* was her rendition of the book's teachings, a gently commanding enunciation – that the press of the time even compared to that of Laurence Olivier – taking centre stage over a lovely (if underplayed) backdrop of sitar, bansuri and tablas.

One is not likely to go back for repeated listens, and has to somehow come to terms with the fact that in the world of The Perfumed Garden women can only rely on men to find pleasure. The booklet's introduction reveals that Neogy was pushed (by exotica-obsessed Westerners) to emphasise an Indian accent. Still, it's a fascinating rediscovery, and the accompanying, lightly erotic photo-heavy book a relevation.

Camilla Aisa

SIMPLY SAUCER
Saucerland
★★★★
MONO-TONE LP



Besides The Stooges, Simply Saucer was perhaps the only group to successfully combine garage punk and the Velvets' cool indifference with the intergalactic psychedelia of *Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*. It made them the ultimate cult band of the '70s.

The teenage mutant Ontarians pre-empted punk with their extraordinary *Cyborgs Revisited* LP, finally released in 1989, but recorded in '74-75. Most of the tracks on *Saucerland*, a double collection of out-takes and rarities, date from '75-78, and despite the lo-fi sonics, it's a blistering listen – from the brutal riffing of 'Rock & Roll The Brain Cells', to the nervy new-wave tension of 'I Take It'. 'Ring A Ling Oh My' sees Moog master Ping Romany creating sounds as otherworldly as Allen Ravenstine or Dave Formula, while the behemothic 15-minute space-rock extravaganza 'Clearly Invisible' rides boldly into the future. There's also a live version of 'Bullet Proof Nothing', still the greatest song the '70s never heard.

Johnnie Johnstone

LISTEN TO SHINDIG! ON SOHO RADIO
Soho Radio

Lindisfarne, all over the radio

Tyne And Weird

LINDISFARNE
Radio Times: Live At The BBC 1971-90
★★★★
REPERTOIRE 8-CD BOX SET

There are some obvious downsides to this 8 CD box containing 159 tracks culled from a variety of BBC radio shows, including *Sounds Of The 70s*, *John Peel's Sunday Concert*, *The Richard Skinner Show* and two Christmas broadcasts from Newcastle City Hall. The first is that roughly 20 are just spoken intros, so can be instantly discounted.

Second is the packaging, solid enough but uninspiring, with the same band photo adorning the covers of the box set, the booklet, and all eight CDs. Clearly Repertoire couldn't match the cost of the slipcased, hardcover book Universal afforded *Marc Bolan At The BBC*, or even the sturdy clamshell and extensively illustrated booklet Esoteric bequeathed their recent *Man On Air* set.

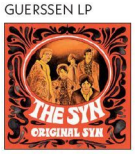
Then there's the inevitable repetition, with 'Lady Eleanor' chalking up a stonking nine appearances over the eight discs, and 'Fog On The Tyne' seven. Their final UK hit single (not counting their execrable reworking of 'Fog' with Paul Gascoigne) 'Run For Home' doesn't show up until Disc Five but still manages four outings. Finally, there is the band's propensity for the occasional novelty number, with 'Scotch Mist', 'I Must Stop Going To Parties' and the omnipresent 'Fog' all present and all best ignored.

On the plus side, this box acts as both a greatest hits package and a comprehensive career overview of Lindisfarne from their debut album through to 1990, with only the three albums released since then unrepresented. The band's eponymous debut and *Fog On The Tyne* tend to hog the track listing, with *Dingly Dell* and '78 comeback *Back And Fourth* not far behind, but this is a good thing as they remain the strongest entries in Lindisfarne's back catalogue. However, '80s outings such as *Sleepless Nights* and *Amigo* also get a look in. Audio quality across the set is mostly very good to excellent.

This collection is probably priced above what the casual listener is willing to pay, but for the curious it makes a worthy substitute for the now out of print *Charisma Years* box. Diehards will almost certainly want it for its whopping 67 previously unreleased tracks.

Peter Gallagher

THE SYN
Original Syn
★★★★★
GUERSSEN LP



London 1967-68 psychedelic dandies The Syn, featuring future Yes members Peter Banks and Chris Squire, began as beat outfit The Selfs, who hold their own through a gritty, acetate version of 'I Can't Explain' on one of the extras here. Other pre-Syn morsels include 'Merry Go Round' and 'Love You'.

The real magic pudding, however, is the pulverising, heavy swing of 'Grounded' and the The Syn's other Deram 45 sides; the groovily intuitive '14 Hour Technicolour Dream', 'Created By Clive' and the poetic 'Flowerman', which is irresistible in demo and finished format. Steve Nardelli's vocals throughout these are compelling. 'Mister White's White Flying Machine' and 'The Last Performance Of The Royal Regimental Very Victorious And Valiant Band' – in addition to the sumptuous bounty detailed above a ferocious stage show – should've secured the group a better future. A couple of '70s demos as Narsquijack, plus detailed notes by David Wells (and Phil Collins!) round out this latest reappraisal, resplendent in hefty sleeve and in black, or limited orange marbled vinyl.

Lenny Helsing

SYNANTHESIA
Synanthesia
★★★★
GUERSSEN LP

One for all you acid-folk fans, London trio Synanthesia's lone album, originally released in 1969 on RCA Victor, is a bit Incredible String Band, a touch Dr Strangely Strange and, on 'Morpheus', a stripped back precursor to 'The Man Who Sold The World' a couple of years ahead of the fact (it's no wonder apocryphal rumours once swirled

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THE THREE O'CLOCK

Baroque Hoedown *(Expanded Edition)*

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MARSHALL CRENSHAW

Field Day *(40th Anniversary Edition)*

Remastered by Greg Calbi w/ bonus 12" featuring 6 bonus tracks (4 previously unreleased)

around the internet that the band backed a pre-glam Bowie).

With previous vinyl pressings (both the original and Sunbeam's 2006 reissue) now hard to track down, Spanish reissue experts Guerssen have filled the void with this new edition, and delightful sounding it is too, every flute trill and jazzy vibraphone run ringing out with (healing) crystal clarity, bringing cuts like 'Mnemosyne' and 'Aurora' into the here and now. Rounded out with incisive liner notes from *Shindig!* contributor Steve 'Plastic Crimewave' Krakow, this is the ideal listen for seeing in the summer solstice.

Thomas Patterson

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Jesus People Music Volume 2: The Reckoning

★★★

ORG MUSIC / AQUARIUM DRUNKARD LP

The second volume of the less-travelled path of countercultural rock made by turned-on (or off) "Jesus People" offers a few fuzzy delights underneath the gospel and fire and brimstone.

Our Generation's 1972 'Hello Friends' has happy clappy post-Mamas & Papas vocals masked by psyched-out '60s garage vibes whilst from the same year The Last Gall Of Shiloh offer a downer folk-rock dirge with fab guitar. Popular acts like DR Hooker and All Saved Freak Band show up too, with heavy sludge-rocker 'All Across The Nation' and 'The Bible'. Less-known is Ohian Patric Galfree's 'Joy Come In The Morning', a slightly schizo but funky rock groove from his '74 album *Dayspring*. You may not return to this again and again, but the highs of hippies seeking salvation offers something of interest.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

VARIOUS ARTISTS

One Mile From Heaven

★★★★

MAPACHE LP

The newest release from Barcelona-based label Mapache, *One Mile From Heaven* is a 20-track compilation of singer-songwriter cuts that originally appeared on private press albums issued between 1969 and '80.

Some of the artists will be familiar to regular readers (Merrell Fankhauser is a firm favourite round these parts; Jim Sullivan, Gary Higgins, Naomi Lewis and Michael Yonkers have seen albums reissued on Light In The Attic, Drag City, Numero and Sub Pop respectively; and Maitreya Kali, aka Craig Smith, was the subject of a deep dive book by Mike Stax). Perhaps of greater interest are even more obscure artists like Jerry and Nancy Stevens – their gentle 'A Little Resolution' is clearly Joni Mitchell-inspired – and Indian musician Carm Mascarenhas, whose 'In The Sun' nestles somewhere between Bill Fay and Rodriguez. A beautiful collection that saves us from dredging through dregs to find the gems of the private pressing world.

Thomas Patterson

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Psyché France Volume 8: Pop 60s-70s

★★★

WARNER MUSIC FRANCE LP

This year's entry in the RSD-specific series may leave listeners scratching their heads at the "Psyche" element of the title but in no doubt as to the "France". The compilers have hoovered up all manner of wiggy gallic pop sounds under the banner – this time they've set their sights firmly on the "Pop".

Les Masters resembled the flock-jacketed Tremeloes and album opener 'Les petites amies' shares the same frantic, cluttered beat-into-psych approach. The roughly chronological journey then takes in Dani's wonky chanson, Jean-Pierre Castelain's ultra-rare groover 'Ce jour-la', Philippe Chatel-Partir's Eurovision-friendly 'Partir' and Quo Vadis's self-explanatory homage/piss-take 'Zeppelin Party' (it's hard to tell with the French!) before arriving at Igor Wakhévitch's confounding 'Chirakan-Ixmucané' – eight minutes of icy new-age synths that couldn't be less Pop if it tried.

Andy Morten

Stackridge, finding their way towards greatness

Slark Attack!

STACKRIDGE

Stackridge

★★★

Friendliness

★★★★

BOTH ESOTERIC 2-CD

The earliest albums from the quirky, genre-resisting Stackridge make their first UK CD appearance in nearly 20 years. The Bristolian band, a rock group with a line-up including a flautist and violinist, made its introduction with music, mostly written by guitarist James Warren, that rarely stayed in one place or had a static, easily marketable identity.

Nineteen-seventy-one's self-titled debut puts it best foot forward by opening with the brightly commercial powerpop of 'Grande Piano'. But it's a style that isn't returned to again at any point on this album or its sequel. What follows instead is an array of musical flavours, from classic harmony-group singing to prog-rock. 'Percy The Penguin' has a Brazilian twist to its melody and chord progressions. It's an impressive debut, with only 'Marzo Plod' and 'Slark' pushing the whimsy button a little too forcefully. The new presentation augments the running order with four bonus tracks.

Friendliness ('72) ups the eccentricity, with a head-spinning variety of musical genres in just the first few minutes, going from prog ('Lummy Days') to theatrical pop (the title track) to music hall ('Anyone For Tennis') and a piano ballad that recalls Anglican hymns ('There Is No Refuge'). There's a Beatles-like sense of whimsy and two more animal songs, 'Syracuse The Elephant', a pop ballad with a baleful violin solo, and 'Keep On Clucking', a rock 'n' roll pastiche about chicken farming ("Can you understand the reason why / All our feathered friends should have to die?"). The original *Friendliness* ended with its best song, the wistful 'Teatime'. Now, however, it comes with a second disc, including single versions and *BBC In Concert* recordings.

Why these imaginative albums aren't more widely celebrated could be down to any number of things; for starters, what might seem amusingly oddball to one listener could be frivolous and gauche to the next (case in point: 'Do The Stanley', a non-album single in the oompah mould, added to *Friendliness*). This is the finest repackaging the albums have ever received, though, and now both can be seen as promising dress rehearsals for the group's commercial breakthrough; their third album *The Man In The Bowler Hat*, which followed two years later.

Charles Donovan

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Stax lynchpins Eddie Floyd and Steve Cropper

Let's Get Down To Business

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Written In Their Soul: The Stax Songwriter Demos
★★★★★

STAX / CRAFT 7-CD BOX SET

This one was made with a bit of magic. *Written in Their Soul* is a seven-disc compilation that exhibits the extraordinary work of Memphis songwriters such as Bettye Crutcher, Eddie Floyd, Mack Rice and Carla Thomas. Between 1957 and '75 Stax was the faucet for soul music, spawning revolutionary players like The Staple Singers, Otis Redding and Sam & Dave. Though not the face of the operation, the songwriters were vital ingredients. After Stax sold their master recordings to Atlantic and went bankrupt in '75, the songwriters' recordings dispersed throughout America, making compilation a real treasure hunt. Luckily, acclaimed record producer Cheryl Pawelski has a great knack for these sorts of digs.

Pawelski began Stax-hunting nearly two decades ago. With the help of Deanie Parker (Stax's original Director of Publicity), Pawelski meticulously made her cuts and narrowed nearly 2,000 hours of music down to 146 songs. Audio engineer Michael Graves had the challenging task of refining the sound, ironing out any glitches or gaps. The first four discs on the compilation contain recordings from Stax writers (the fourth disc features songs by Stax writers that were released elsewhere), and the last three discs feature unused songs. Though some of the tunes are familiar, like Eddie Floyd's sweetly sung '634-5789' that Wilson Pickett energised and popularised, most are unfamiliar.

On the uncut tracks, it's startlingly clear that many of these performances were auditions. Not because of the quality of sound or singer, but because of an elusive buzz. There's a crackling energy on this compilation created by the soul-baring, brave, intimate performances of these young songwriters. Many were desperate to find artistic (and literal) shelter from Memphis' unyielding segregation and tumult. Many had never recorded their work on tape and were anxious to hear themselves.

There's an especially poignant moment with the song 'Walk On Back'. It's the only song attributed to an unknown artist. Like many of the other demos, it seems like it could have been a hit and we're left to wonder why it wasn't, and who the mysterious writer – a potential future star – was.

Tess Carges

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Sabroso Go Go
★★★★

MUNSTER LP

This revealing trip deep into the depths of the expansive '60s and '70s catalogue of Peru's Discos MAG offers the listener a veritable bonanza of rarely heard tropical novelties and offbeat collectors' items.

The dazzling bill of fare manages to take in everything from exotica, ye-ye, cumbia, guaracha-flavoured twist, rock 'n' roll, mambo, boogaloo, rumba, beat, tropical garage, and all manner of related weird and wonderful hybrids and associated sub-genres. Of the 14 tracks, special mention must go to Nallye Fernandez's memorably all-action 'Batijugando', a riotously high energy creation inspired by the theme from the *Batman* TV series, Kintos' 'Kintos Boogaloo' and Patty Pastel's enchanting 'Computador Electronico', a Spanish language version of 'Der Computer Nr 3' originally sung in German by France Gall. File under seriously stylish, utterly maverick and relentlessly lively.

Grahame Bent

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Where Have All The Boot Boys Gone?
★★★★

CAPTAIN OI! 3-CD BOX SET

The notion of "yob-rock" as a genre has resulted in a surprising number of compilations, some of them of dubious origin, but here's a legitimate wide-ranging attempt to gather together a kosher bunch of releases that sum up the subject.

Disc One tackles the defining junkshop glam years with tracks from Shakane, Third World War and Hector, who's 'Wired Up' single is a classic of the era, whilst the second disc starts to move towards punk with Slaughter & The Dogs bewailing changing fashions on 'Where Have All The Boot Boys Gone?'. The third and final selection serves up more punk with The Lurkers and Cockney Rejects plus Steve Jones' post-Sex Pistols outfit The Professionals performing the succinct 'Mods, Skins, Punks'. There's also a scattering of Australian acts (surely the natural heirs to the yob-rock throne) amongst the turmoil, with Stevie Wright, The Ted Mulry Gang and Rose Tattoo representing the Sharpie movement.

Henry Hutton

WE ALL TOGETHER
Volumen II
★★★★

MUNSTER LP

Back on vinyl after just 50 short years, the Peruvian quintet's second LP develops their debut's McCartney and Badfinger covers and inspirations into a full set of accomplished and beautifully-produced originals.

There are still a lot of Beatleisms to spot, from the 'Savoy Truffle'-esque guitar break and Long Medley-inspired guitar tones of 'Silly Roadman' to the 'Glass Onion'-ish vamp of 'Ozzy' and the 'Imagine'-y piano and Leslie guitar of 'Little Boy'. But once the band has got these out of its system it becomes simultaneously more delicate and more proggy in the second half. 'Cloudy Night', for all its Harrison-esque guitar swirls, is a thing of sparkling beauty, the furious time signature breaks of the organ-led 'Follow Me If You Can' are fascinating, and the romantic string writing of 'Persons And Faces' returns for the gently lovely 'I'd Like Her To Be Mine', before a final not-quite-goodnight.

Christopher Budd

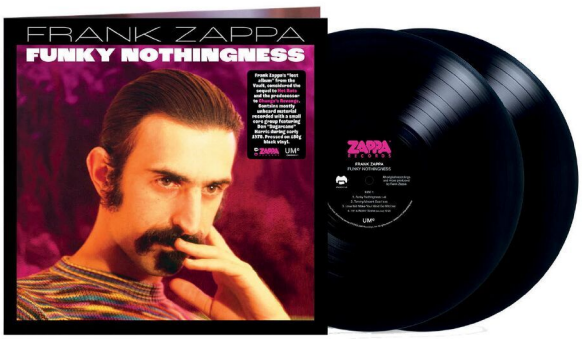
FRANK ZAPPA
Funky Nothingness
★★★★★

UME/ZAPPA 3-CD/2-LP

Another expedition into the cavernous Zappa vault has yielded some impressive and unexpected results. Taking its title from a bluesy curio recorded during the *Uncle Meat* sessions in 1967 what we essentially have here is the sequel to Zappa's'69 solo debut *Hot Rats*, had he actually decided to release it before re-surfacing with *Chunga's Revenge* the following year.

Stylistically picking up where *Hot Rats* left off, the 11-track album mixes characteristically Zappa-esque compositions and covers ('Sharleena', 'I'm A Rollin' Stone') with his trademark instrumental extravaganzas ('Chunga's Revenge', 'Tommy-Vincent Duo II', 'Khaki Sack', 'Twinkle Tits'). As for formats, the reconstructed "lost" album comes as double vinyl while the triple CD edition includes two additional discs of out-takes, alternate edits, unedited masters and "bonus nothingness", all of which makes this an audio feast guaranteed to satisfy the appetite of even the most demanding Zappa freak.

Grahame Bent



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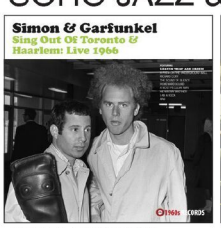
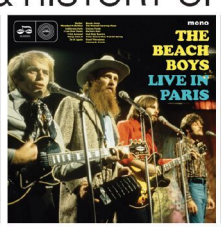
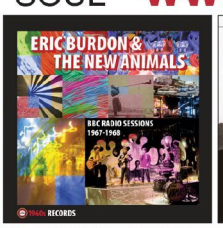


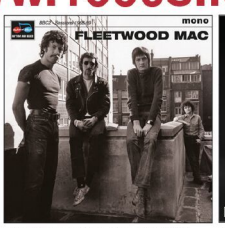
Simon & Garfunkel £8
Live in 1966 R&B76



Beach Boys R&B95 £8
Paris 1969 soundboard



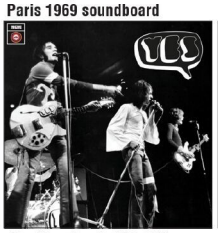
Eric Burdon/Animals 1967 £8
BBC Sessions R&B100



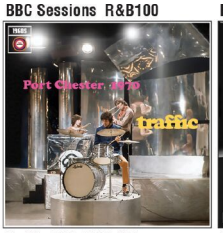
Fleetwood Mac £12 R&B97
BBC Sessions 1968-69

Janis Joplin R&B102
£12 Live on TV

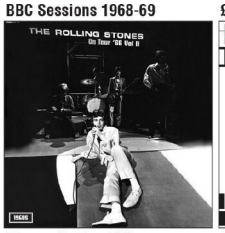
Fairport Convention £12
BBC Broadcasts R&B96



Yes Broadcasts '69 £12
Red vinyl R&B103



Traffic £12 R&B104
Live at Port Chester



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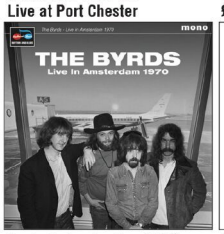

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Ghee Whiz

NIGHT BEATS
Rajan
★★★★

FUZZ CLUB / SUICIDE SQUEEZE LP

Night Beats was once a band with a sole permanent member. Then it was the project of one man working with like-minded producers. Now, more than ever, Night Beats feels like a kaleidoscopic journey into the mind of Danny Lee Blackwell. But that doesn't mean the music has become introverted. On the contrary, album number six is a multitudinous affair brimming with the kind of joy that sharing your favourite sounds with others brings.

Rajan's touchstone is the more adventurous, globe-trotting side of psychedelia; one of the genre's biggest lessons was to follow your heart in whichever stylistic direction it might take you, and Blackwell has not only learned that through 14 years of Night Beats, he's also honed his own characteristic take on that philosophy. Here he evokes the trippy sounds of the late '60s and the neo-psych of today, the deep grooves of Anatolian rock, cinematic soul, vintage east-meets-west pop, spaghetti western soundtracks and even hip-hop.

'Cautionary Tale' is outlaw country baked under the sun, 'Motion Picture' launches with Velvets strut, 'Osaka' inhabits a haunted dub vibe and 'Moroccan Blues' delivers precisely what the title promises, closing the album with a treat for sitar lovers. 'Thank You' is Bobby Hebb's 'Sunny' after some serious intercontinental travelling (and a few lysergic diversions), while '9 To 5' (very much not the Dolly Parton song) rings like a breezy, piano-driven update of '(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction'. 'Hot Ghee', the record's opener and instant stand-out, serves as a reflection on *Rajan*'s own buttery amalgam of styles and space/time-travelling interests.

The fact that the album can be so overtly omnivorous while never sounding like a haphazardly pieced together selection of tracks is something for which Blackwell surely has to be commended. What it does resemble is a memorable crate-digging expedition – you'll be scouring different bins at different times, happy to bump into unexpected finds, then heading to the counter with a motley stack of vinyl that defines you more than words could do. *Rajan* is a far-reaching depiction of Night Beats' musical psyche and a delicious listening experience to boot.

Camilla Aisa

Night Beats' Danny Lee Blackwell

THE ADDYSMADDYMADDYS
From Here To There
★★★★

GREY LP

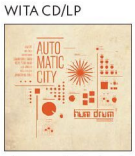
This was always going to intrigue one way or another, as well as prove a thoroughly provocative listen. The Addysmaddymaddys is a Dutch group helmed by Grey label kingpin and veteran record mogul Marthy Coumans, assisted by friends including guitarist Eric Geevers.

Broadly speaking, *From Here To There* is outsider/outlier music, truly independent, its template drawn from myriad strains and flavours of the rock 'n' roll palette; punk and many other challenging alternative indie sounds are at its core. Each track offers an abundance of surprises and can feature instruments being brutalised one minute ('Name Your Goat') while conveying more subtle nuances the next ('Immature And Infantile'). Pathos, humour, passion, defiance and the twin elements of provocation and confrontation are just some of the qualities that feature in plentiful supply across the whole record. Fans of Swell Maps, The Mirrors, Wire, Pere Ubu and other free-thinking aggregations will find much to enjoy within these grooves.

Lenny Helsing

AUTOMATIC CITY
Hum Drum
★★★★

WITA CD/LP



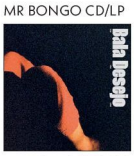
The stylised drum machine on the cover of this Lyon four-piece's third LP may wrong-foot some – because as the characteristic rhythm of the 808 quickly gives way to a set of deep cut covers and blues-inspired originals, *Hum Drum* is actually revealed as a highly organic, even soulful record.

Reinterpreting Mamie Perry's shuffling 1959 'Lament' with electric sitar and swirling guitar/synth textures is rather bold, as is the LP's most interesting outing, a cover of Chuck Berry's 'Downbound Train' that eschews guitars altogether, featuring instead a Joe Meek-esque wall of chattering chirps. On Side Two the cover versions are more '60s/70s-themed, including a dubbed-up take on Curtis Mayfield's 'Hell Below' (sadly missing the characteristic Brassmaster bass) and a jangly, spacey run through Roy Budd's 'Get Carter'. The band meld all these influences into a trio of self-penned reverb-heavy psych-blues numbers, of which chugging outro 'Wandering Soul' is the most engaging.

Christopher Budd

BALA DESEJO
Sim Sim Sim
★★★★

MR BONGO CD/LP



With an unrivalled enthusiasm for releasing forgotten classics, Mr Bongo is doing great things for Brazilian music right now. But the label also strives never to neglect the here and now and, in this spirit, has tapped into the new wave of independent Rio-based music with *Sim Sim Sim*, the Latin Grammy award-winning debut from Bala Desejo.

Before joining forces, Dora Morelenbaum, Julia Mestre, Lucas Nunes and Zé Ibarra had already hitched their individual wagons to the rising tide of new Brazilian music. Once their original plan of performing live as a foursome was repeatedly scuppered by the pandemic, the band decided to abandon that idea altogether in favour of entering the studio. And what they deliver is a music indebted to Brazil's golden era. Bala Desejo never lean too heavily on any one genre and as such offer a sumptuous blend of Tropicalia, jazz-funk, samba rhythms and post-bossa pop. A tropical, topical debut.

Sarah Gregory

BLOWERS
Blown Again
★★★

CHAPUTA! LP

Flying the flag for blistering, no-let-up scuzz-rock are Melbourne garage-punks Blowers. The quartet's second album is as in-yer-face as they come – 14 hi-octane tracks that display no ambiguity or nuance but are big on rebellion and contain more than a sprinkling of expletives. No unnecessary guitar solos, just short, sharp songs that say what they need to say.

'Shut The Fuck Up' captures the frustration we've all felt with our fellow human beings from time to time, while 'Let's Age Disgracefully' extols the joys and non-virtues of staying true to your punk rawk spirit. Central to the band's sound is the triple lead vocal attack. Guitarists Kit Convict and Andy Porter, and drummer Shannon Aswell all lead the charge, while bassist Pip McMullan holds down the low-end rumble. Your grandma may not approve but *Blown Again* will appeal to your inner teenage rock 'n' roll rebel.

Duncan Fletcher

SAM BURTON
Dear Departed
★★★★
PARTISAN CD/LP

After gracing last year's Sylvie album (an instant favourite here at *Shindig!* HQ) with his quietly arresting vocals, Sam Burton presents the follow-up to his impressive 2020 debut. If that record's sleeve pictured him sitting on a church pew, now we see him as a solitary figure walking among a vast open field. It's a fitting depiction of the lonesome purity emanating from the music within: amber-hued wistfulness steeped in slow-burning Americana, often cradled by lush orchestration.

Recorded at producer Jonathan Wilson's studio in Topanga, Burton's songs choose to be timeless instead of nostalgic; they'll conjure a Laurel Canyon observed through the window during a long narcotic autumn in recovery from the overcrowded Summer Of Love, but that place belongs to fantasy more than history. On tracks such as 'I Don't Blame You', the blend of pensive croon, troubadour guitar, strings and backing vocals bears the ghost of Leonard Cohen.

Camilla Aisa

JULIE BYRNE
The Greater Wings
★★★★
GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL CD/LP

In 2017 *Not Even Happiness* was an arresting revelation in the new singer-songwriter canon. Six years and some major life events later, Julie Byrne presents the much-awaited follow-up.

Some of these songs were born on tour, some had a long gestation. The pandemic put a halt to the recordings and then, in the summer of 2021, Byrne's long-time musical accomplice and producer Eric Littmann died aged just 31. Grief is all over the record. A comparison could be made with Mount Eerie's *A Crow Looked At Me* – but whereas that album was ablaze with detail-rich expressionism, Byrne pursues transcendence. This feels like a summer record, too, not just because of titles and imagery, but because it brims with reflective stillness, luminous clarity. It builds upon the previous LP's up-close dream-folk ('Portrait Of A Clear Day') and simultaneously broadens the sonic palette (the haunting 'Summer Glass' soars through Littmann's celestial synths).

Camilla Aisa

THE CLIENTELE
I Am Not There Anymore
★★★★
MERGE CD/2-LP

The Clientele's music is steeped in poetry and the elusiveness of memory, but it seems Alasdair MacLean has become increasingly conscious of his own mortality, so much so that he's thrown everything bar the kitchen sink into the band's latest sprawling 19-track double LP.

The cello that sets in motion the gargantuan eight-minute opener 'Fables of The Silverlink' – a sort of pocket *Forever Changes* – might suggest a refinement of the intricate chamber-pop to which we've become accustomed. But twixt the familiar arpeggiated vibrato and breathy hooks ('Lady Grey', 'Blue Over Blue', 'Claire's Not Real') lie a cluster of sonic surprises, most notably the bleak and feverish 'Dying In May', built on an Arabic flamenco rhythm, and the remarkable 'My Childhood', a two-part *avant-garde* experimental piece set to poetry (narrated by The Would Be Goods' Jessica Griffin), the reprise of which ('The Village Is On Fire') is accompanied by uncharacteristically dubby beats. A brave and ambitious step into the unknown.

Johnnie Johnstone

CO-PILOT
Rotate
★★★★
DELL'ORSO CD/LP

Sitting in the flight deck of Co-Pilot we find two familiar faces: Leonore Wheatley (of The Soundcarriers and International Teachers Of Pop) and Alan Peter Roberts (aka Jim Noir). It's one of those pairings you wouldn't expect to happen but makes perfect sense once it does.

Housed in a sleeve that frames it as a more ruminative heir to Silver Apples' *Contact*, the duo's debut album is a masterclass in multi-layered lush *avant*-pop and overall good taste. With its balance of the catchy and the experimental, *Rotate* brings to mind Broadcast, especially on cuts such as 'Brick'. 'I Am 1' enters R&B territory, while 'She Walks In Beauty' follows with a slow-burning ghostly incantation; highlight 'Spring Beach' blends retro-futuristic electronics and extra-dimensional dream-pop vocals with a result worthy of hauntology's finest moments. At once literate and emotional, *Rotate* is a rewarding listen that welcomes different discoveries with each new visit.

Camilla Aisa

RONNIE D'ADDARIO
All Gathered In One Room
★★★★
HOMBURG CD

As dad to one of the coolest bands on the planet, The Lemon Twigs (his sons Brian and Michael *are* The Lemon Twigs), Ronnie D'Addario's solo exploits have unsurprisingly been revalued in the light of his offspring's success. He was, after all, responsible for introducing them to the seminal baroque rock and powerpop that they digested and have elevated to great acclaim.

On his 11th solo outing, D'Addario senior embraces genres ranging from old fashioned rock 'n' roll to quirky show tunes, never losing sight of a catchy melody. Opening with 'A Shot In The Dark', with its Beach Boys harmonies and Andrew Gold vibe, the set also includes the brooding Procol Harum-esque 'He Did It' and poppy 'The Statue'. Stand-out track though is 'The Journey', a gorgeous piano-led ballad which, once heard, is almost impossible to dislodge. This is going to have huge appeal to anyone who still celebrates the heyday of '70s AOR.

Chris Twomey

GREEN PAJAMAS
This Floating World Is A Dream
★★★★
SOUND EFFECT LP

Seattle's usually prolific Green Pajamas take a shortcut by stripping last year's *Forever For A Little While* CD of its powerpop tunes and releasing the result on vinyl as *This Floating World Is A Dream*. While neither a new album nor a straight reissue, there is no denying the original's dreamy baroque soundscape, all sweeping desert landscapes and sultry obsidian nights, is brought into sharper relief.

Eastern-flavoured 'The Hidden Fortress' sounds like Donovan scoring a Ray Harryhausen *Sinbad* movie, 'Six Minutes In Heaven' is 1967-style psych with added cowbell, and if 'Wildly Polite' had been around that year The Monkees would surely have covered it. 'Kimono Dream' recalls Ditch Trilogy-era Neil Young, and 'Psychedelic Sun' is Bono and Thom Yorke swapping bands and racing each other to come up with a tune. The album's only downside is that top Pajama Jeff Kelly doesn't utilise Laura Weller's bewitching backing vocals nearly enough.

Peter Gallagher

A better class of Clientele

Into the woods with Carrie Martin

GUIDED BY VOICES
Welshpool Frillies
★★★★
GBV INC CD/LP

When the world went into distanced mode, the ever restless Guided By Voices knew they'd figure something out. They started playing music from different states, with producer (and *de facto* sixth member) Travis Harrison admirably piecing everything together afterwards. Three years and eight albums later, it's finally safe to go back to the old ways.

Robert Pollard and rockin' troop got together in a Brooklyn basement to record yet another impressive batch of new songs, often opting for live-to-tape thrill. The result is the memorably titled *Welshpool Frillies*, a 15-track blast of hook-dense jangly guitar-rock. It's often reminiscing of GBV's late '90s/early 2000s foray into polished production (especially on tracks such as highlights 'Cruisers' Cross' and 'Seedling'). Considering that those were some of the band's finest offerings – ranking up there with the early celebrated lo-fi classics – that's surely a testament to the fine form the band is currently in.

Camilla Aisa

THE HANNAH BARBERAS
Fantastic Tales Of The Sea
★★★
SPINOUT NUGGETS LP

Named after the legendary American animation studio that gave us *The Flintstones*, *Yogi Bear*, *Top Cat*, et al, The HBs are anything but cartoonish. But that doesn't mean they're immune to having a good time and inviting us along for the ride.

'You're So?!' is a snappy Bert Kaempfert shuffle (think 'Happy Trumpeter') with a B-52s call-and-response between Lucy Formolli and Damien Devaney. It's party city, and that's just track one! Trumpets burst forth amidst the bopping 'You're A Camera', the smiling-through-the-heartbreak 'When You Were My Boyfriend' is a tonic for every bad break-up you've ever had, and the title track is brimming with catchy hooks, harmonies to die for and should be a hit single. It's fluffy, funny and full of fizzy pop to encourage dancing, romancing, and hanging out with friends reminiscing, consoling, and raising a pint or two!

Jeff Penczak

HIPBONE SLIM & THE KNEEJERKS
Gone To The Dogs Plus You've Been Rumbled!
★★★★
CROWN TOPPER CD

Giving listeners bang for their buck are Hipbone Slim & The Kneejerks, one of our most prolific rock 'n' roll combos. On this expansive release, the irascible quartet presents not one but two of their latest platters, *Gone To The Dogs* and *You've Been Rumbled!*, on one small shiny digital disc. Think of it as a ready reckoner, and marvel at the ample dexterity of Hipbone (aka Sir Bald), Bash, Pete and Gez as they pile into the likes of 'Lou Anne', 'So Wrong, She's Right' and 'Hey, Hey Ali Mae' – all rockers with guitars and drums blazing – like they hailed from the Pacific North-west, instead of somewhere around the English Home Counties.

Irrespective of the style they're aiming to emulate – twang central, Medway-esque three chord distortions – the group expresses itself equally well; 'Shawknee', 'Hang Thirteen' and 'Waxhead' impressive examples of the former. Overall, this is a successful, noteworthy exercise in garage band rocking, with attendant surf 'n' roll dynamics.

Lenny Helsing

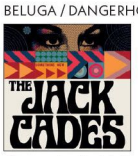
THE HOLY FAMILY
Go Zero
★★★★
ROCKET RECORDINGS CD/LP

With a stellar line-up that boasts Guapo alumni David Jason Smith (Stargazer's Assistant), the ubiquitous Kavus Torabi (Gong, Utopia Strong) and Emmett Elvin (Chrome Hoof), The Holy Family's eponymous 2021 debut was an intoxicating rush of drone miasma. Not wanting to waste a precious moment, the wheels were immediately set in motion for the follow-up, as the band prepared for their next descent into the psychedelic undergrowth.

Wielding the same occult-ish spirit as its predecessor, *Go Zero* sees The Holy Family once again toying with dark hypnotic loops on 'Bad Travelling' and 'Chalky's Eyes', while 'Hell Born Babel' boasts *Saucerful Of Secrets* vibes. Lighter moments come in the form of 'The Watcher', with its ethereal piano motif, and Part III of the album's centrepiece, 'Go Zero Suite'. With lyrics inspired by sci-fi guru Brian Catling and post-production by Finnish studio man Uusimaki, this is a fabulous return for The Holy Family – long may they reign.

Sarah Gregory

THE JACK CADES
Something New
★★★★
BELUGA / DANGERHOUSE SKYLAB LP



It says something for the quality of this Brit quartet's own songwriting that a spirited cover of The Velvet Underground's 'Temptation Inside Your Heart' isn't immediately the best track on their third album. That said, there is a distinct Velvets influence on their chugging garage-folk rock and clean, jangling guitar sound, but it's very much filtered through '80s indie bands like The Pop Guns, The Weather Prophets and Biff Bang Pow, while the reverb-drenched riffs of The Brian Jonestown Massacre are another possible touchstone.

Mike and Elsa Whittaker share vocals and guitar duties throughout; Elsa's 'Tommy' shimmers like a lost C86 classic, while Mike's 'Flip Flop Fly' has a 'Roadrunner' feel, complete with three-note Farfisa organ. Mike contributes some nice lead guitar on 'Electric Messiah' and drummer Mole is on fine propulsive form, especially on the two twanging instrumentals ('Rise' and 'Last Stand') that bookend this brightly beguiling LP.

Ben Graham

CARRIE MARTIN
Evergreen
★★★★
PSYCHOTRON CD/LP

For all the surface warmth of this third album from Hull singer-songwriter Carrie Martin, there's an undercurrent of melancholy. Rain falls like tears on the beautiful opening song 'Beside The Evergreen'. Elsewhere, pieces are broken, threads are frayed and shadows are cast.

Martin sings these lyrics in a high and attractively tremulous voice accompanied by delicately picked acoustic guitar. Credit is also due Jim Waltham for his spare but supple bass playing. Much of the album sounds timeless, with the exception of 'Keep In The Light', on which the overblown prog arrangements ironically eclipse the song. At its best the album demonstrates that less is more, as on 'Boxes Of Nothing', a delightful instrumental showcase for Martin's guitar. Relatively conventional compared to some of the weirder elements of contemporary folk, *Evergreen* demonstrates that there is still much virtue in classic songwriting.

Clive Webb

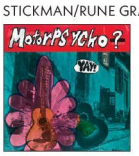
MIDNIGHT CALLERS
Rattled Humming Heart
★★★★
JEM CD/LP

'New York Tramp'. With a title like that I'm expecting some classic glam, and the opening track of Midnight Caller's sophomore effort delivers, evoking the days when Sweet broke free from their Chinn-Chapman fetters. 'Step!' sounds like the band is aiming for T Rex but land on The Arrows, but is no less enjoyable for that, and although Midnight Callers have but one sticksman, 'Closer' simulates The Glitter Band's caveman stomp.

As indicated by the above, the era *Rattled Humming Heart* most calls to mind is the late glam period when Bolan and Bowie had moved on, but Midnight Callers combine that glitter-into-powerpop with early 21st century brattiness *a la* Hives, Vines and early Killers, as songs like 'Little Runaround' and 'The Plan' make clear. This fast-paced, fun album is modernish rock, then. Think The Strokes in gold lamé jeans.

Peter Gallagher

MOTORPSYCHO
Yay!
★★★★
STICKMAN/RUNE GRAMMOFON CD/LP



Norway's national treasure with over 30 Top 10 releases in as many years, the 'psycho's latest eschews the grungier heavy metal trappings of recent releases for

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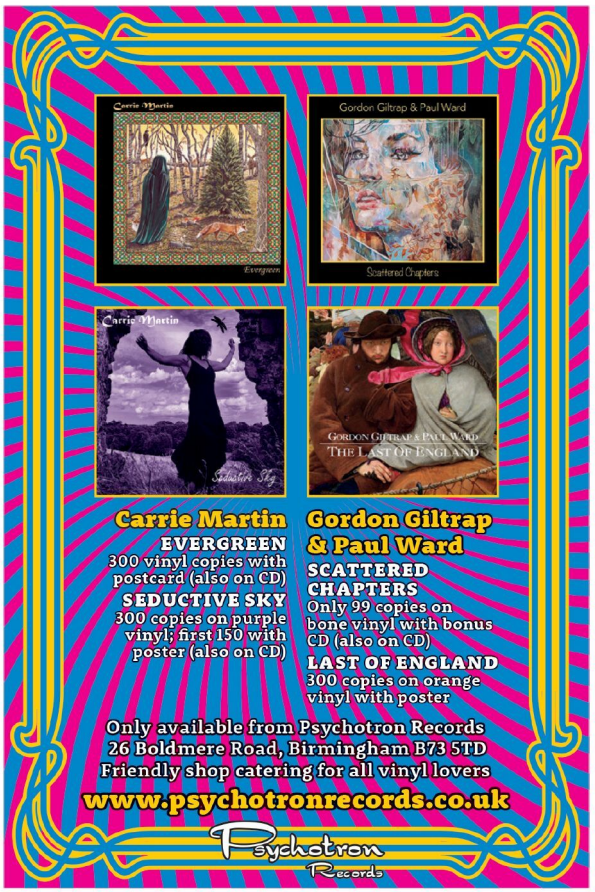

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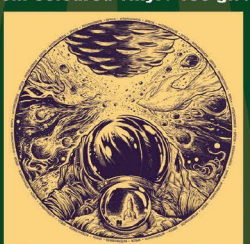


www.SULATRON.com
BROKENSILENCE CODE7

God is in the detail. Walker Phillips knows

an intimate, acoustic-based collection of pop songs.

'Cold & Bored' perfectly soundtracks a lie-down in the summer grass, 'Sentinels' is Simon & Garfunkel inviting the Floyd over for a spot of tea, and toothpicks will help prop up those heavy lids during 'Patterns'. But softer doesn't mean diluted, and while the songs are quieter allowing your mind to drift away and play tricks on you, 'Hotel Daedalus' demonstrates they haven't completely abandoned their proggier days. Not many bands can successfully reinvent themselves this late in their career and with newest member Dungen's Reine Fiske co-producing the band alongside his Amazing bandmate Fredrick Swahn, Scandinavia's old and new psychedelic scenes combine to take another great leap forward. Yay, indeed!

Jeff Penczak

THE MULLENS
Get What You Deserve
★★★

GET HIP LP

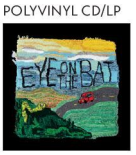
While they've continued to tour it has been more than a decade since The Mullens released their last album, *It's Hard To Imagine*. The line-up has changed over the years but the garage-punk sound and ethos remain the same.

Listeners should strap in tightly for the fast and relentless ride through 10 songs driven by fast beats and furious riffs. There's an element of blues here too, including the occasional burst of harmonica. Singer Tim Stile may proclaim himself a 'Bad Bad Man' in the title of one song, but for the most part he's the one who appears to have been done wrong. "I'm so high off the ground / You just bring me down," he sings on one track, vowing on another, "When you cry / I'll be laughing at you." Lyrically and musically raw, this is a frenetic but hook-filled return from the Dallas rockers.

Clive Webb

PALEHOUND
Eye On The Bat
★★★★

POLYVINYL CD/LP



Starting out in the Boston DIY scene, El Kempner's Palehound have been pushing their range of expression through four captivating LPs. *Eye On The Bat* loses none of the spontaneity of those early offerings while adding even more craft and imagination.

Palehound play fuzzy indie-rock that possesses both punch and melody, marrying a '90s lo-fi feel with blasts of bouncy powerpop and generous hooks ('The Clutch' is already one of the most electrifying singles of the year). The songs also brim with the sort of candid, so-personal-it-can-feel-universal lyricism contemporary singer-songwriters are taking to new heights. But whereas that category is filled with singers that inevitably tend to sound like one another, Kempner stands out as one of the most distinctive voices of today. Their vocals can be tender, hushed, breezy or rousing. The feelings they embody are hard-won throughout, feeling at once intensely pondered and spontaneously confided.

Camilla Aisa

PER SVENSSON PSYCHEDELIC SOUNDS
Magic Trip
★★★

KOMMUN 2 LP

Contemporary Swedish psych overlord Per Svensson returns with the third in his current cycle of solo albums and the sequel to 2021's *Gothenburg Sounds*. In addition to fronting his current ensemble, the all-seeing all-hearing all-conjuring Svensson is heard here colouring his canvas with a multitude of diverse instruments.

As before, Svensson's trademark sound and approach is one of deep, slow-burning moodiness that gradually builds in intensity, whether on the heavier, layered and fuller sounding tracks like 'Born To Go', 'Together In Darkness', 'Bleed' or, equally potently, on trippy pastoral opener 'Magic Fingers' and emotionally stark resonance of 'The Tree'. Along the way, revealing points of reference including Hawkwind, The Doors and the ghosts of Johnny Cash ('The Energy That Heals'), Leonard Cohen ('Mother Nature's Child') and Nick Cave can all be heard making their contrasting presences felt.

Grahame Bent

WALKER PHILLIPS
God's Eye
★★★★

GUERSSEN LP

It's fitting that Walker Phillips lives in San Francisco, a city with a long-standing psychedelic heritage. His second album honours and extends the city's peculiar legacy. *God's Eye* is a trip into Donovan-esque acid-folk. Wholesome acoustic instrumentation such as guitars, flutes, hand percussion and sitars weave their magic around Phillips' uniquely cosmic lyrics and voice.

Side One could be classed as the "song side", with five sensitive tracks centred around nature, astrology, consciousness – all very Age Of Aquarius, full of cosmic love, and highly enjoyable. Flip the disc over and you're into deeper "head" territory, the whole side taken up by 'Lovebird>Lovebird II' which starts out in traditional song form before branching into experimental jazz, tape-spliced from an hour's worth of improvisation. It was inspired by the splicing technique pioneered by Teo Macero on Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew* and acts as a deep counterpoint to Side One's whimsy.

Duncan Fletcher

JAMES REDMOND
Video City II
★★★★

AV8 LP

Finally releasing his debut album, Redmond is a long-standing lynchpin of the Liverpool scene, from bassist-songwriter with Tramp Attack to Coral frontman James Skelly's 2012-13 group The Intenders. Skelly crops up on *Video City II*, lending his distinctive vocals to the loping, Mellotron-driven groove of 'Running With The Devil', while Tramp Attack bandmate Dave McCabe (latterly of The Zutons) delivers ominous spoken word on 'This Is Knowsley'.

Inspired by the arcade games and movie rental posters of the VHS era, the tracks flow together like a mix tape. The dominant vibe is stoned, lo-fi psychedelia, but the songs are all tantalising trailers for coming attractions in a variety of genres, from unexpected rap number 'Rainbow Road' to the lilting folk-pop of 'Will She Meet Me'. Choosing between hypnagogic Beach Boys pastiche 'We'll Go Racing' and the sci-fi braggadocio of 'The Fang' is impossible, however; you'll surely want to rent them all.

Ben Graham

LEAH SENIOR
The Music That I Make
★★★★

POISON CITY CD/LP

Leah Senior's last album *The Passing Scene* was released at the height of 2020's pandemic. Though not a lockdown album, her latest captures a sense of that conflicted time. Across several of its songs there's an expressed desire to experience the world and its joys, along with a need for quiet introspection. It's this delicate push and pull between socialising and solitude that's at the heart of *The Music That I Make*.

Opening with sumptuous baroque guitar, the album's title track finds her deepening her commitment to self-expression despite the attendant hassles of the music industry. It's refreshingly honest mission statement. There are lighter moments too. 'Pony' is based on a daydream of escaping to the country, 'Downpour' is a short instrumental interlude featuring the sound of rainfall, while 'The Fig' is lyrically cryptic number with heavy Laurel Canyon vibes. It's all beautifully played and recorded, and full of disarming charm.

Duncan Fletcher

THE SOUND OF POP ART / CHRIS FREE
Shapes & Shadows
★★★★

ENGLAND IN JUNE CD/LP

Readers, be advised: the summery rays bursting from this album are so bright that sunglasses and skin protection should be applied.

Here are 10 new melodically rich and

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HALF MAN HALF BISCUIT

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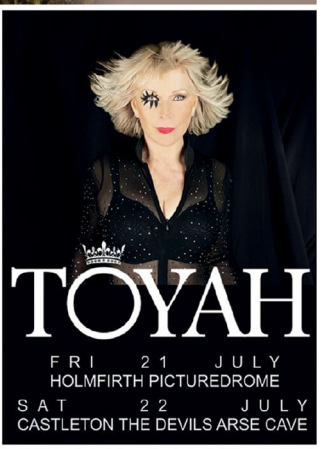

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PICTUREDROME HOLMFIRTH

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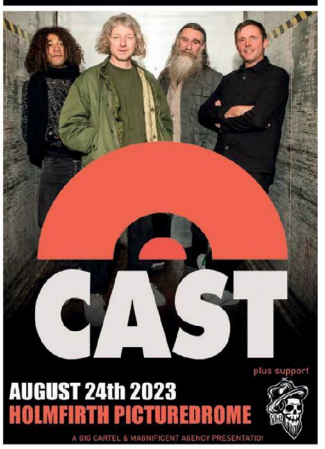

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Returning Legends

BETTYE LAVETTE
LaVette!
★★★★
JAY-VEE CD/LP

Two decades into her impressive second act, Bettye LaVette presents an album of songs by Randall Bramblett, whose 'Where A Life Goes' was included on her 2015 album *Worthy*. Bramblett, an extremely talented American writer, first emerged with two fine Polydor albums in the '70s, and his mix of blues, rock, gospel and folk couldn't hope for a better interpreter than LaVette, whose endearingly worn, cracked voice knows how to tell a story.

Not unlike Tina Turner and Candi Staton, LaVette has an instrument that ennobles any material it's given. Her alchemical ability with song is all over the album, which keeps the celebrity guests including Steve Winwood to a minimum and lets the singer, backed by an exemplary New York band, shine. LaVette turns in glowing performances that make the most of the rough-hearted honesty and wry humour in the songs, in particular 'Lazy (And I Know It)' and 'Plan B'. We're not sure LaVette's last label Verve would have gone with the typeface used on the front cover, but everything else is just right.

Charles Donovan

YUSUF / CAT STEVENS
King Of A Land
★★★★
BMG DARK HORSE CD/LP/DIGITAL

Yusuf reteams with long-time producer Paul Samwell-Smith for his second album since reviving his old pop troubadour name (third if you count 2020's *Tea For The Tillerman* reworking), and the resulting *King Of A Land* is a pleasing mix of the fresh and familiar.

The title track is the most unmistakeably Cat Stevens number, strong enough to stand with his '70s heyday songs *and* survive the inclusion of a children's choir, while 'Pagan Run' sounds a helluva lot like Yusuf has been listening to '80s Neil Young and Warren Zevon.

There's a smattering of Zevon in the lovely madrigal-hymnal hybrid 'Son Of Mary' too. 'The Boy Who Knew How To Climb Walls', another highlight, recalls the later work of Stevens' old flute player Peter Gabriel, and 'How Good It Feels' is a childlike ballad that appropriately explodes into Disney lushness. Simply put, if you've previously enjoyed Cat Stevens, you'll love this.

Peter Gallagher

attractively arranged songs from TSOPA. The influence of the '60s is clear throughout. This is true not only of the sound, which owes a debt to the likes of Burt Bacharach and Brian Wilson, but also lyrics that evoke the social and political protest of that decade, most winningly on the title track, a socialist anthem that draws on the civil rights slogan "We shall overcome" to call for a redistribution of wealth and end to monarchy. Many of the tunes last less than three minutes but compress much into their short running time. Chiming guitars, languid saxophone and swooning harmonies sweeten the sound. Yet the most affecting song here is the sparse acoustic reverie 'Until Forever', a flight across skies dimmed from daylight to night-time dark.

Clive Webb

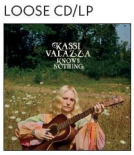
STAR COLLECTOR
Attack, Sustain, Decay... Repeat
★★★★★
CLOCKWISE CD

Vancouver-based Star Collectors' 2021 album *Game Day* was a superb, meaty slab of powerpop that garnered a five-star review in these pages. This follow-up is even better, so what are we gonna do? Give it a five-star plus?

The band – who've been around on and off since 1999 – have only recorded six albums to date, which is undoubtedly why they're not better known. But this will surely grab the momentum. Mod and '70s rock inspired throughout, we kick off with 'Feel It Comin' On', a heady wall of sound that could easily have been penned by Pete Townshend in one of his more melodic moods. Elsewhere we get great tunes on which Alice Cooper is seemingly in a grapple with Cheap Trick, or Ray Davies has inexplicably collaborated with Ian McCulloch. Overall, nothing feels too bombastic or samey, though. The guitar work is consistently brilliant and the vocals are perfectly calibrated to each song – hard-core rocker or ballad. Never a dull moment.

Chris Twomey

KASSI VALAZZA
Kassi Valazza Knows Nothing
★★★★
LOOSE CD/LP



A singer-songwriter based in Portland, Oregon, Kassi Valazzia writes country songs that draw from the genre's traditions and concerns, but also document her own inner life, hopes, and fears. These are songs with slowly revealed nuance, depth and meaning. Valazza grew up in Arizona, and it's the state's wide-open spaces that are invoked on her latest album, the follow-up to 2019's self-released debut *Dear Dead Days*.

She's tastefully backed by members of Portland's TK & The Holy Know-Nothings. Softly strummed acoustic guitars, weeping pedal steel and tinkling piano conjure up images of small hours sessions in a deserted roadside honky tonk. There's more than a re-working of country music's top traits however – 'Watching Planes Go By' has a hint of improvised psychedelic rock, its dual guitar solos drawing comparisons with Heron Oblivion. There's also a persistent undercurrent of stately British folk, not least on album closer 'Wildageeses'.

Duncan Fletcher

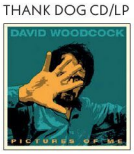
TONY VALENTINO
Dirty Water Revisited
★★★
BIG STIR LP

Famed Standells guitarist Tony Valentino has recreated and reimagined his iconic songs. *Dirty Water Revisited* offers *Nuggets*-era fans the opportunity to hear the songs of The Standells with new ears.

Raucous as ever, Valentino takes us through his catalogue of classic riffs and melodies from 'Dirty Water' to 'Try It'. Both 'Vicki' and 'I'm A Sexy Punk Rocker' are new additions to Valentino's catalogue. The latter makes overt the underlying, nostalgic drive of the album: "It's still 1979 in my mind." Of course, some songs sound dated – 'Riot On Sunset Strip' doesn't quite hit like it used to. The newly recorded songs don't add much to the conversation, but they sweetly demonstrate a punk-rocker's inability to relinquish the rebellious torch he once lit. Check out 'There Is A Storm Comin'' and 'Love Me' for a rollicking romp.

Tess Carges

DAVID WOODCOCK
Pictures of Me
★★★★
THANK DOG CD/LP



Woodcock's third, and first for four years, sees the Southend songsmith further develop his songwriting craft with this assured collection.

His debut seemed an amalgam of all that Essex musically had to offer and, although enjoyable and promising back then, he now seems to have truly found his own voice, albeit one he shares with Damon Albarn (the mature Good, Bad & Queen chanteur rather than the *Parklife* goon).

Indeed, maturity is the filter through which the dozen tracks are percolated. This is Adult Orientated Indie, with echoes of Costello ('Bad Habit'), The Smiths ('Unsociable') and Pulp and The Style Council respectively on stand-out tracks 'Moving Fast' and 'Windows'. 'Clones' and 'Cafe Culture' are two further high spots, the former a Jarv-ish number that screams for the Giorgio Moroder treatment, but the understated arrangement here is probably more judicious. Is the average *Shindig!* reader his audience? Probably not, but some of you should be.

Vic Templar

LOS CHIJUAS
Están Cambiando Los Colores De La Vida / Changing The Colors Of Life
★★★★
DISCOS QUILOMBO

Los Chijuas may already be familiar to some via a handful of appearances on compilations of '60s Latin-American pop and psych. Hailing from the Mexican state of Chihuahua, the group was active into the early '70s, but the 1968 single 'Están Cambiando Los Colores De La Vida' certainly seems to be their most celebrated side.

Driven by its infectious Farfisa organ, this a minor-key beat gem with strong hints of American folk-rock. The flip here – 'Changing The Colors Of Life' – is a winning English translation of the A-side, which appeared on Rhino's *Nuggets II* box set some years back. This new edition is the first release from Discos Quilombo, who promise more seven-inch rarities from Mexico, Peru and Bolivia. Housed in a nice picture sleeve, and with a limited run of 500, it's well worth tracking down.

Ben Phillipson

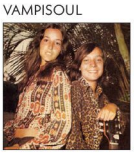
DOLLSQUAD
Tiki Lifestyle / Cave Gurl
★★★★
GOGO-BONE REKKIDS

Nurtured from the same rock 'n' roll DNA as The Cramps and The B52's here is Australia's longest-standing all-female garage band DollSquad and they're itching to tell you about their 'Tiki Lifestyle'. This is a killer track featuring a stop-go beat that chugs along in a haze of fuzzed-up, hand-clapping, toe-tapping mayhem that'll make you want to dance your grass skirt off before drinking "too many cocktails and never enough".

The fun continues on the flip with a thudding garage pounder on which swooping organ and a biting vocal lead to a glorious freak-out fuzz solo as the ladies reveal their plans to embrace the life of a 'Cave Gurl'. With stand-out production and performance either song could be the A-side as both tracks drip with attitude and confidence. The icing the cake on this release is that both the sleeve and label design are evocative and impeccable.

Henry Hutton

ELIA Y ELIZABETH
¡Alegria! / Ponte Bajo El Sol
★★★★★
VAMPISOUL

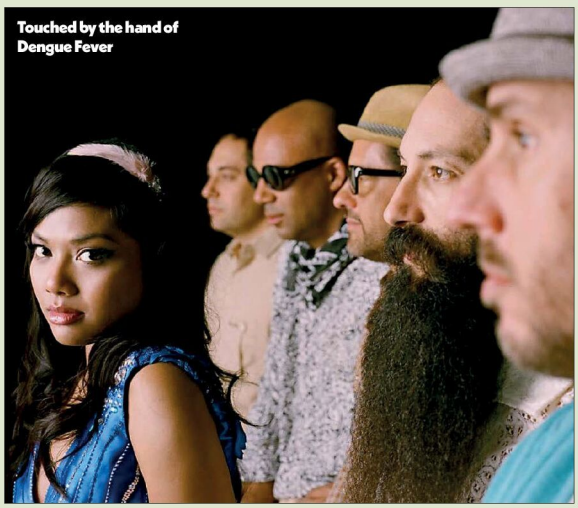


You want seductive tropical pop-psych at its finest? Then look no further than sensational Colombian sister act Elia y Elizabeth, who shine incandescently on this first time pairing of two of their best loved songs on one 45.

Continues over

tracks

CAMILLA AISA rounds up this month's digital downloads and stray oddities



Touched by the hand of Dengue Fever

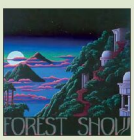
Our monthly selection of *Tracks* begins with a welcome return: LA-based outfit **DENGUE FEVER** have recently announced their first album in eight years, *Ting Mong*. The purposefully soothing vibe of the record is reflected in lead single **'Touch Me Not'**, a hypnotic slice of slow-paced psychedelia blending desert-shrouded guitars, mellow grooves, Eastern-tinged horns and, of course, the gorgeous vocals of Chhom Nimol, still rooted in the tradition of her native Cambodia.

Almost 20 years since their debut LP came out, **THE BUDOS BAND** have amicably parted ways with Daptone Records and launched their own label Diamond West. Goes without saying, the news comes with cool sounds: true to its name, **'Frontier's Edge'** isn't content with inhabiting just one place, favouring instead a fusion of east-meets-west rock, deep funk and vintage soundtracks.

Grab some popcorn, **THE MAL THURSDAY QUINTET** is taking us to the movies. New song **'A Smell Of Honey, A Swallow Of Brine!'** borrows both name and inspiration from the kind of flick we'll never say no to in this neck of the woods, a mostly forgotten mid-60s curio with a rebel heart. The music – welcoming Thom Sullivan from Lords Of Altamont on drums – follows suit with beat-enamoured drive.

Like aural bookends, cosy rain sounds introduce and close the first single from London-based singer-songwriter **FREDA D'SOUZA**. Fittingly recorded at home, the soothing **'Windowledge'** is exactly the kind of song to seek shelter in when outside greyness starts pouring: a folk lullaby with all the hushed warmth of dream-pop, it seems to make the world slow down.

Based in Kansas but formed after a chance encounter in Arkansas (too bad they don't rhyme), **SWEEPING PROMISES** are Lira Mondal on bass and vocals and Caufield Schnug on guitar and drums. Two people and – as the infectious **'Eraser'** immediately demonstrates – a gift for noisy catchiness. The song channels lo-fi pop, art-school punk and the DIY side of new-wave with a decidedly today sensibility.



Lots of gems are being unveiled by the good people at Guruguru Brain, the label founded by members of Kikagaku Moyo. This month's repeated listen is a new release from Taiwanese brother duo **MONG TONG**. As they set to explore the sounds of Southeast Asia (by way of both musical tradition and street sampling), they play something that's close to the more far-out edges of '70s psych. **'Forest Show'** is a fantastic place to start the journey, eerie and seducing in equal measure.

May **LA FORCE** be with you. Under the moniker there's Canadian artist Ariel Engle (Broken Social Scene) and equally arresting sounds. On **'condition of us'** her vocals are full-bodied, at once commanding and caressing. The smoky, lyrical bass is something mid-70s Joni would have given a big thumbs up, while the sax abstractions bring to mind the most affecting moments in Bon Iver's fusion of folk and soul-searching electronica.

Can't get enough of saxophone-punctuated sheen? All we have to do is reach Australia, where **LULUC** have recently announced a new album and shared gorgeous title track **'Diamonds'**. The name comes from the duo's knack for going into depths, which results in multi-layered elegant sonic textures and lyrics that revel in both detail and transcendence. "It's all a dream," Zoë Randell's stunning voice recites, and it's a fitting description of what the music conjures.

We now stop in Peru, where we find psychedelic travellers **BÚHO ERMITAÑO** with eyes staring straight into the sky. It's not the sun-blessed blue sky you might expect though; what instrumental **'Entre Los Cerros'** interrogates is the dark, unexplored vastness favoured by kosmische musik and space-rock. Remember the Stargate sequence in *2001: A Space Odyssey*? That's more like it.

Back in the US, and more precisely in the ever-fertile grounds of Athens, Georgia, we meet Christina Schneider aka **LOCATE S,1**. On **'You Were Right About One Thing'** – a tune that sits evenly between hummable soft-rock and modern art-pop – she sings of doomed affairs. In the song's video she plays both sides of the troubled romantic coin, offering brightly coloured nods to John Waters, film noirs and Pedro Almodovar in the process.

We're used to hearing **DAVID A JAYCOCK** make guitar music steeped in traditional folk, or dive deep into improvisation-inclined atmospheres. There's one more facet to the Cornish music maker, his new album's lead single indicates. **'Coming Up In Paris'** finds him shifting his gaze to retro-futuristic pop, synths at hand, striking a searching, ghostly balance between Kraftwerk and John Cale (the godfather of music adventurers whose records never quite resemble one another).

As they get ready for album number – drum roll, please – 22, restless purveyors of fine guitar pop **THE BLACK WATCH** come up with the ultimate relatable song title: **'More Lies From The Government'**. Political warnings aside, the single is an instant charmer that brims with classic shoegaze and dream-pop hookiness and brings to mind the timeless magic of C86.

Originally featured on the sisters two albums *¡Alegria!* and *Elia Y Elizabeth* (both 1973), this new edition arrives as a hugely welcome follow up to Vampisoul's previous reissue of the sisters' '71 debut single 'Fue Una Lagrima' / 'Cae La Lluvia'. Although the warm beating heart of the sound revolves around the sisters' vocal intonations, that's only part of the story, thanks to the crucial role played by composer and arranger Jimmy Salcedo and his group La Onda Tres, who provide the supremely stylish backing tracks. Seek urgent medical attention if these slices of Latin pop perfection don't instantly raise your spirits.

Grahame Bent

THE HORNETS

Loss For Words / Mary Ann

★★★★

HORNET

Here's a fine piece of work from a working four-piece operating out of West London and now gigging heavily around the capital.

'Loss For Words' is a propulsive slice of R&B with a soulful lead vocal from singer Sam Winn. Adding to the joy of one driving, stinging lead guitar solo, guitarist Bailey Penny provides the listener with a second whilst the piston-tight rhythm section of Nelson MacLure on bass and Filipp Krisan on drums holds down the beat with consummate ease. The band reflects its busy touring schedule with the tight, no-nonsense approach that only comes from working the gigs and getting that beat in the pocket. The flipside arrives at a slightly slower pace but this mournful yet still driving track comes across as the kind of impolite pop that would sit easily alongside the likes of The Troggs in the mid-60s pop pantheon.

Henry Hutton

THE JACKETS

Life's Not Like The Movies / Attracted

★★★★

CHAPUTA!

The Swiss trio released four full-lengths and a slew of singles across numerous labels before launching their own Wild Noise imprint with 'Pie In The Sky' earlier this year. They celebrate 15 years as one of Europe's top garage acts with this return to Chaputa! after last year's double single with The Courettes.

It's a foot stomping groovy garage gasser based around Jackie Brutsche's snarly vocals and fuzz pedals in full flight. Shout-along lyrics add to the fun, which continues on the flip with 'Attracted', with amps turned up to 12 and a punkier attitude recalling The Stooges and Voidoids in their heyday. A popular attraction throughout Europe, they bring their high-octane performance to our shores in November. It promises to be an exciting night out so mark your calendars now and watch for dates and locations.

Jeff Penczak

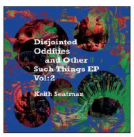
KEITH SEATMAN

Disjointed Oddities And Other Such Things EP Vol 2

★★★★

KSA AUDIO CD

A follow-up to 2018's original *Disjointed Oddities...* EP, these five instrumentals should tide fans over till the forthcoming release of Seatman's eighth album proper.



'A Fine Hurrah' mixes industrial noise with celebratory synth fanfare, recalling the abstract experiments of Basil Kirchin, while 'Sleepy Time Rest' conjures the kind of back-to-the-nursery psychedelic nightmares that were recurring scenarios on *The Prisoner* and *The Avengers*. An insistent voice, possibly from a vintage toy, urges immediate shuteye over a burbling Casio rhythm and a parping, marching melody that could've come from The Residents. Elsewhere, 'Simply Meeting By The Way' is a classic "haunted music box" composition, while on 'Tricks And Motion', spare jazz piano tentatively navigates a landscape of boinging, chiming things, rattling looms and distant mechanical percussion. Winding up with a Simon Heartfield remix of last year's 'The Grand Alchemists Parade', this 16-minute EP is a perfect introduction to Seatman's evocative, unsettling world.

Ben Graham

THE STOICS

Enough Of What I Need / Hate

★★★★

OKTO-BONE REKKIDS

From the full-colour picture sleeve, detailed liner notes, courtesy of *Shindig!*'s very own Lenny Helsing, and enhanced sonics thanks to Alec Palao's outstanding audio restoration, it's clear that a lot of work has gone into the reissue of this mean, moody and magnificent vintage Texan garage-punk gem.

Originally released as a seriously limited pressing on the band's own BRAMS label in January 1967, their solitary 45 represents the complete recorded output of this San Antonio five-piece that counted future members of The Argyles, The Children and The Rubayatt among its ranks. Alive with raw untamed energy, 'Enough Of What I Need' comes with tantalising hints of The 13th Floor Elevators while the comparatively manic 'Hate' feels considerably rawer and more primal in every way. Repeated plays don't come anywhere close to diminishing the power of this covetable 45.

Grahame Bent

And representing Florida, The Burlington Squires

United States Of Mynd

VARIOUS ARTISTS

The Wind Blows Your Heart

★★★★

YOU ARE THE COSMOS 4-EP

This is a rather novel idea in an era in which we still endeavour to fight digital and embrace physical commodity. Instead of delivering yet another 16-track garage compilation of tracks we likely own elsewhere, the prospect of four regional EPs with four bands on each is a far more enticing prospect for the collector. The regions featured are New York, Florida, Ohio and Mississippi. One only hopes there'll be more. How about California, Texas, Massachusetts and Washington next? This set is definitely in the more refined pop and folk-rock styles popular – lots of jangle and polite vocals and mid-tempo rhythm 'n' beat, rather than all out fuzz and sneer.

Highlights include the moody teenbeat of The Weads' 'Don't Call My Name', The Burlington Squires' subtle fuzz-laced, harmony-led 'Back Up', Diamond Rings' pounding Brit Invasion-indebted 'Which Way Is Up', and the UK psych-pop styling of Substantial Evidence's 'Death Angel', which would sit perfectly on a *Rubble* comp if it weren't for that very American folk-rock chime hiding underneath the Procol Harum pacing. The Strags' 'Psychedelic Soul' and The Chylds' 'I Want More Lovin'', as good as they are, do stand out like sore, soulful thumbs though. Perhaps Massachusetts may have worked better on this set due to its, on the whole, poppier and gentler musical tone.

Whilst certainly not all killers, this is a decent enough effort that any fan of such third-tier compilations as *Sixties Rebellion* or *Psychedelic States* (from which all of these tracks are licensed) will enjoy. Minor criticisms may be levelled at the art, and its digitally rendered drawings of period dwellings and garage band instruments. It would have been better to see band images or some form of photographic representation. Label images do appear on inserts. Also, if buying for the purposes of deejaying, the EP is always a tricky format to work with.

Let's see what future volumes bring.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

The Jackets

THE SWEET NOTHIN'
Silly Games / Four In The Morning
★★★★

MOJO-BONE REKKIDS

Latest single from US Mojo Bone imprint is this previously unreleased pairing by The Sweet Nothin', a Bucks County, PA/ Trenton, NJ outfit. The recordings date from 1967, with 'Silly Games', an original composition, proving a real grower. It comes across as both accessibly poppy yet garage-y, the rhythm and lead guitar moves – amidst more obvious rock and pop influences – showing that the group must've been paying attention to the forward-thinking antics that the likes of The Yardbirds – and perhaps The Syndicate Of Sound and Jefferson Airplane – had been busy cooking up.

The five-piece group's interpretation of Faron Young's 'Four In The Morning', an equally noteworthy missive, is a cool, delightfully chunky sounding effort of a more folk-rock persuasion, informed by confident, melodic vocals, plus well executed instrumentation. Comes with detailed insert that charts the group's biography and lifespan.

Lenny Helsing

THE YARDBIRDS
Happenings Ten Years Time Ago / Psycho Daisies
★★★★

DEMON

Progressive, futuristic and metallic – even by the standards of cutting-edge British rock in October 1966 – The Yardbirds' eighth single still sounds like little else, of that time or since. Jimmy Page and Jeff Beck's intertwined guitar parts deliver blow after blow of six-string carnage – Beck's siren-like calls before his eye-popping solo are both wayward and utterly controlled. Jim McCarty's sturdy drums pin the whole thing down, while Keith Relf's spectral vocal and esoteric lyrics have ensured the recording's legacy as a psychedelic milestone.

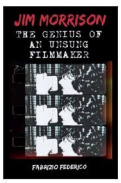
Page and Relf were absent for 'Psycho Daisies', the rockabilly-indebted flipside that presaged Beck's imminent solo and group adventures. Experimentation this brave couldn't last, and the Page/Beck line-up was short-lived, as was any chance of future chart action.

Housed in a replica sleeve of the German edition, Demon's new pressing lacks the punch of the Columbia original – hardly surprising, the original pressing is a beast, and can still be picked up for less than twice the cost. Further Yardbirds and Relf repros are due soon.

Andy Morten

JIM MORRISON: THE GENIUS OF AN UNSUNG FILMMAKER
Fabrizio Federico
★★

SELF-PUBLISHED



Despite the best of intentions, this exploration of Jim Morrison as "unsung filmmaking genius" comes across as something of a confused ramble awash with starstruck hyperbole. Part biography, part band history, part analysis of key recordings, part deification of Jim Morrison the poet, visionary, performer, rebel, cineaste and yes, UCLA film student, the book's scattershot approach means the focus of the narrative is frequently allowed to stray from the heart of the matter: Morrison as would be and ultimately frustrated filmmaker.

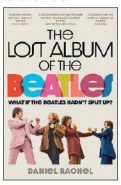
Although justly celebrated for the cinematic quality of his lyrics and poetry Mr Mojo Risin''s legacy as a filmmaker essentially rests on The Doors' involvement with the *Feast Of Friends* documentary and his experimental road movie *HWY: An American Pastoral*. That said, it feels like the book seeks to portray Morrison as a *bona fide* filmmaker trapped within the frustrating confines of a hugely successful and iconic rock band.

That's not to say the work is entirely without merit. The sections detailing the content of *HWY* are informative and the revelations of Morrison's contacts with a major Hollywood studio and his friendship with *nouvelle vague* auteurs Agnes Varda and Jacques Demy during his exile in Paris add flavour and context. The real puzzle here is why Federico chose to end a book about Morrison's love affair with cinema with a transcript of his Miami court appearance?

Grahame Bent

THE LOST ALBUM OF THE BEATLES (WHAT IF THE BEATLES HADN'T SPLIT UP?)
Daniel Rachel
★★★★

OCTOPUS



A fairly tired question sits at the heart of this book, one that could elicit a weary response. "They did split up – get over it!" "And anyway, how many books about the Fabs do we actually need?"" One's immediate instinct may be to disregard Rachel's text as a shameless cash-in, an exercise in futile speculation. But it's much more than that.

To be fair, the second half of the book (the "lost" album part – let's face it, there *was* no lost album) manages to contrive an imaginary track listing comprising unreleased demos, *Get Back* session cuts, B-sides and the pick of each of the four Beatle's early solo outings – with even Ringo afforded one side of material to himself. But why shouldn't we have some fun imagining such a thing?

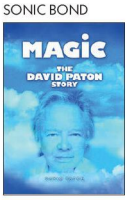
Where the author does excel is in the first part of the book – a meticulously researched study of the reasons for The Beatles' demise. The story may have been told a thousand times, but rarely with such surgical precision. Rachel's sources are varied and many and he makes extensive use too of Michael Lindsay Hogg's eye-popping *Get Back* footage, lending the story layers of fresh perspective and insight. Beatlemaniac or not (what's up with some people?), it has to be worth a punt.

Johnnie Johnstone

The young Nick Drake and his mum, his whole life ahead of him

MAGIC: THE DAVID PATON STORY
David Paton
★★★★

SONIC BOND



Best known as the erstwhile front man of Pilot, David Paton – who wrote their mega-hits 'Magic' and 'January' – never ceased to make a major contribution to the rock and pop world during the '70s, '80s and beyond. It's just that most folk didn't notice it. Nor would most remember that he was also an early member of The Bay City Rollers.

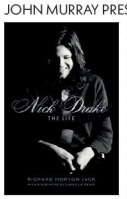
Born and bred in Edinburgh, the now 73-year-old Paton's CV includes collaborations with some of the greatest artists of our times. He spent a few years in the Elton John band, did session work on Kate Bush's first two albums, was a member of The Alan Parsons Project for a decade – and that's just for starters. He also toured and/or recorded with the likes of Camel, Chris Rea, Chris De Burgh, The Pretenders, Rick Wakeman, er, Elaine Paige – the list goes on.

Written primarily as a memoir for his daughters and grandchildren, Paton's life story understandably swerves revelations of a particularly salubrious nature. Nevertheless, you can quickly read between the lines and get a sense of who was a joy, or a pain in the arse, to work with. Collaborators such as Fish, Albert Hammond and Labi Siffre don't come out particularly well, and there were awkward encounters with the likes of Freddie Mercury and Chrissie Hynde, whose minder once slammed a hotel door in David and Elton John's face. Even weirder is the account of Rick Wakeman being chased out of his glamping tent by a warthog during a tour of South Africa, and Brian Wilson singing 'Magic' to David backstage at a gig in Edinburgh in 2011.

Chris Twomey

NICK DRAKE: THE LIFE
Richard Morton Jack
★★★★★

JOHN MURRAY PRESS



Richard Morton Jack's superb, much-anticipated biography of Nick Drake is a beautiful, sad, at times crushing portrait of a life too short. Written with Gabrielle Drake's blessing and unprecedented access, its scope is huge, and RMJ has gone above and beyond to trace Drake's life almost to the footstep.

The cast of interviewees alone is staggering (from key players like Gabrielle, Joe Boyd and John Wood, to Cambridge acquaintances like Zaphod Beeblebrox himself, Mark Wing-Davey, and even Billy Connolly). A fact-stuffed book like this can be in danger of coming out a little "dry", but RMJ brings new life to familiar stories. The four chapters covering Nick's signing to Witchseason and the genesis of *Five Leaves Left* are particularly wonderful, showing his youthful enthusiasm and commitment. His creative peak and slow personal decline thereafter are charted with laser-sharp focus. Familiar figures are shown in unflattering lights – Sandy Denny berates an intimidated Nick for clamming up in her presence, while John Martyn acts like a total shit. But in the main, everybody else just wants to help him.

This is as much the story of loving parents Rodney and Molly as it is Nick's, and his final years make for a wrenching read as they try and fail to save him. Heartbreakingly, Rodney's gifts of home recordings of his late son to visitors lead inadvertently to a series of bootlegs. We'll never really "know" Nick Drake, but for all the pain charted in this book, it shows him vividly alive.

Martin Ruddock

The great and good take to the stage for the star-studded finale of 'Gloria' at the *Nuggets* live celebration
PHOTO TESS CARGES

NUGGETS
Alex Theatre, Glendale, Los Angeles
FRIDAY 19TH MAY

When Patti Smith sought out Lenny Kaye to be her poetry-accompanying guitarist, her only question was if he could "play a car crash with an electric guitar". Immediately responding, "Yeah, I could do that," Kaye was no stranger to melodious car crashes. As the founding rock archivist, Kaye made a name for himself early with his 1972 compilation *Nuggets: Original Artyfacts From the First Psychedelic Era*, which quickly became the bible for kids who would grow to love and define "punk". In honour of the new, sparkling 50th anniversary box set, Kaye convened with the popular Wild Honey Foundation to make the Los Angeles celebration a benefit for their organisation.

The audience is wonderfully predictable, full of giddy adults that still show the penchant for mischief and well-aimed snarl that once brought them to *Nuggets*. Every eavesdropped conversation offers a glimpse into the evolution of garage-rock and the loyal followers it has amassed. Excited murmurs give way to huge applause as Kaye takes the stage.

Kaye is the fabulous MC for the night, offering quips and insights into the songs that the crowd knows by heart. "We're celebrating the spirit of rock 'n' roll. To me, that's what all these bands are about: yearning, desire and becoming." Kaye's enthusiasm is infectious as he announces legends as diverse as The Chocolate Watchband, Billy Vera, The Electric Prunes, The Seeds, Evie Sands, The Leaves and Peter Zaremba of The Fleshtones.

The line-up rotates seamlessly between every rendition. Musicians ebb and flow, but never lose the beat. Each song, be it Nick Guzman and Tom Kenny's ebulliently shrieked rendition of 'Liar, Liar', or Susanna Hoffs' defiant 'I Want Candy', radiate major wattage. Introducing his song 'Don't Look Back', Vera takes us through the many genre-bending iterations of the tune. Initially written for Chuck Jackson and later recorded (and buried) by Cyndi Lauper and Robert Plant, 'Don't Look Back' found its greatest iteration courtesy of The Remains. Performing it now with gusto and grime, Vera illuminates the long and winding road that led from soul to punk. It's awesome.

"Lenny Kaye's enthusiasm is infectious as he announces legends as diverse as The Chocolate Watchband, Billy Vera, The Electric Prunes, The Seeds, Evie Sands, The Leaves and Peter Zaremba of The Fleshtones"

With a lot of pride and awe, Kaye introduces Love guitarist Johnny Echols and Dramarama frontman John Easdale for a performance of Love's 'Seven And Seven Is'. They nail what Kaye aptly describes as Love's "most insane song". Between songs, Kaye tells us, "If you had told me I'd be standing here at The Alex Theatre 50 years later, I would have fucked it up with the weight of history." That's the beauty of *Nuggets*: it was never intended as anything more than a niche celebration, but now its messiah has a packed theatre in Glendale grinning back at him.

The evening ends with a rousing rendition of Them's garage band anthem 'Gloria'. Every musician from the evening joins Kaye on stage to close the celebration and give one final salute to all who have made *Nuggets* and to all who have listened. Here's hoping we get many more celebrations like this one.

Tess Carges

Battlestag Galactica and The Fadeaways (inset) bring "primitive thuggishness and deft musical chops" to Hipsville
PHOTOS: JEFF PITCHER

HIPSVILLE
Lido, Margate
FRIDAY 28TH MAY-SUNDAY 30TH MAY

There are three sure-fire guarantees at every yearly Hipsville. One: the crowd will have the craziest costumes at any party in the UK. This year the future dystopian theme sees Judge Dredds, Zaphod Beeblebroxes and a crowd straight from the streets of *Blade Runner*'s Los Angeles. Two: the line-up will bring the freshest rock 'n' roll bands from around the world to the bucket-and-spade shores of Margate. Check! And thirdly, there will be a lot of dancing gorillas lurking around. Yep, there's one on the roof of the harbour arm's tiki bar, dancing to The Atom Jacks and – Jesus – humping *Shindig!*'s photographer.

Friday night sees a searing set from Skinny Milk, some polite rocking courtesy of Senior Class and the excellent Loose Articles, whose post-punk tunes sit somewhere to the left of Kleenex.

Saturday is, however, where things really lift off. The Atom Jacks' daytime surf set is appropriately soused in sunshine, although the band are almost overshadowed by the aforementioned gorilla incident and Tina from Oh Gunquit! cosplaying a go-going Tank Girl. Back in the Lido, Sacramento's Th' Losin Streaks are playing their first ever UK show. Their hopped-up, frenetic garage is tailor-made for the Hipsville crowd; nimbly walking that fine line between primitive thuggishness and deft musical chops. It's exhilarating stuff. Japan's The Fadeaways kick things up another notch, leaping off the drum kit from the get-go. They're all striped T-shirts, howls and surf-pod haircuts, with a classic garage sound to match, and, like Th' Losin Streaks' set, it falls like sweet, sweet rain on parched ground.

Battlestag Galactica are Wigan's The Stags in appropriately futuristic drag. Always hilarious, this year they ratchet things up a notch. Witness the unveiling Halford-9000, a low-rent, malfunctioning version of *2001*'s AI anti-hero, watch them as they reinterpret *Silent Running*'s flower watering scene as a battle between two seven-foot robots, and gasp as they bring on the preserved head of Ken Dodd (and Ken Dodd's Dad's Dog's Dead Head) to sing a gleefully off-kilter version of 'Happiness'. Other ridiculous – yet still roller-coaster enjoyable – covers include DAF's 'Der Mussolini' and a soaringly souped-up version of 'I Lost My Heart To A Starship Trooper'. They somehow manage to skilfully realise the lot in a gritty punk fashion. If this is the future, let's bring on the time machines.

Kate Hodges

THE LEMON TWIGS
Electric Ballroom, London
THURSDAY 1ST JUNE

The wonderful thing about US shimmering popsters The Lemon Twigs is that they just get better and better. Still revelling in the '60s and '70s influences that are the cornerstones of their existence, the D'Addario brothers' latest and fourth long-player *Everything Harmony* finds the pair hitting their best form yet. So it's little surprise that by the time they take to the stage for the final night of their current tour the crowd is giddily hyped.

Opening with 'The One' from the magnificent *Songs For The General Public*, the Twigs proceed to drop one musical treasure after another. Their newest tracks are received with rapturous applause, but they delve deep into their back catalogue too, veering between ultra-harmonious pseudo-glam and all-out rock. Looking every bit the part, there is, however, a new-found maturity here. Not just from the perspective of their songwriting, which has undoubtedly crystallised into something even more special, but in their performance. Older tracks sound refreshed and weightier and sit perfectly alongside the brothers' new singer-songwriter direction, and there's tremendous fluidity as the band (including borrowed Uni Boys guitarist Reza Matin) nonchalantly switch between instruments. Michael shifts from guitar to his trademark drums; Brian from guitar to bass. Special mention must go to Brian's breath-taking acoustic encore and the brothers' superb version of Herman's Hermits' 'No Milk Today' segueing neatly into The Beatles' 'I'll Be Back' – a song better-suited to their harmonic talents would be hard to find. With tremendous support from all-girl trio Tchotchke, this was a night of pure pop thrills and a triumph for all involved.

Sarah Gregory

The young man's back again. Father John Misty interprets Scott Walker
PHOTO: BBC/MARK ALLAN

LANDLOCKED
The Featherstar, Wirksworth
FRIDAY 12TH-SATURDAY 13TH MAY

The brainchild of Dagger Debs bassist Letty, along with partner Jules (aka The Mandelbrot Shakes), Landlocked sees punters travelling from far and wide to a quaint Derbyshire village for this inaugural surf rock 'n' roll party.

Friday's indoor show features Sheffield's finest purveyors of wave riding riffs Surf Muscle, followed by sizzling garage-punksters The Sleazoids, with life rafts ahoy for those daring to enter the dance contest.

Saturday sees the sun goddess smiling on the outdoor show, and there's reverb in the air, and Hawaiian shirts on backs. Big Russ Wilkins and Lightnin' Holling toast the proceedings with their brand of elementary rock 'n' roll that includes 'The Incredible Disappearing Woman' dedicated to mature women; of which there are a multitude here.

Local trad-surf collab Toxic Peak present the first cover of The Chantays' 'Pipeline', and boiler-suited Milk Lizards burn rubber with the ferocious Davie Allan-esque 'Test Drive'. Brighton combo The Tridents bring the most varied set including crooning and murder ballads, and a mock Spaghetti western number complete with whistling. The Damn Shebang arrive with Cramps-infused energy; and 'Goths On The Beach' confirms their shady inclinations. London institution The Beatpack present a mix of new and classic cuts such as 'Where The Water Runs Deep'. Rounding off this successful sold-out bash with a mind-blowing cover of Deee-Lite's 'Groove Is In The Heart' are The Atom Jacks. The coolest '90s does '60s surf kids on the block. Lady Miss Kier would approve.

Debbie Sheringham

THE ZOMBIES
Oran Mor, Glasgow
FRIDAY 26TH MAY

Sold out – and not just for weeks or months but years thanks to the original date and subsequent attempted re-stagings falling victim to the pandemic – The Zombies are finally back in town for a gig with "event" written all over it.

Aside from the power of the current edition of the band, the first thing that becomes apparent is the remarkable tone and clarity of Colin Blunstone's voice. Early 45 sides 'I Want You Back Again' and 'I Love You' are given an airing as are a cluster of classics from *Odessey & Oracle* including the sublime 'Care Of Cell 44' and 'Time Of The Season', with selections from the new album *Different Game* woven into the fabric of the show.

By the time Rod Argent is explaining the genesis of Argent's 'Hold Your Head Up' you can sense we're gearing up for the home straight. In time-honoured fashion, an extended excursion though said anthem serves as a suitably baroque showcase for his supremely fluid keyboard skills. After the briefest of pauses a storming sprint through an impressively energised 'She's Not There' follows and concludes with Messrs Argent and Blunstone duetting on a nakedly vulnerable rendition of 'The Way I Feel Inside'. It's Zombie perfection and the applause says it all. Feeding off the momentum, the band returns to take a final bow with a welcome outing for Colin Blunstone's early '70s solo hit 'Say You Don't Mind', which comes delivered with his customary calm assurance.

Grahame Bent

FATHER JOHN MISTY SINGS SCOTT WALKER WITH JULES BUCKLEY AND THE BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
The Barbican, London
FRIDAY 19TH MAY

Would this huge ask be pulled off? The answer is yes, yes and yes. Near the end of the hour and a half concert, conductor and arranger Jules Buckley introduces the musicians, saving his applause-winning signal to the singer for last. He names him "Josh Tillman". Tonight, the bravura and performance of Father John Misty is reined in, leaving the blessed vocalist to be himself and sing the songs of a great with confidence and respect. And sing he does. His phrasing, tone and emotion all perfect.

The bulk of the programme focuses on Scott Walker's classic 1967-70 albums (*Scott* through *'Til The Band Comes In*) with 'The Electrician' (from The Walker Brothers' *Nite Flights*) and 'Farmer In The City' ('94's *Tilt*) allowing Buckley to flex his *avant-garde* muscle with aplomb; Tillman admirably managing every difficult nuance without fault. The whole show is the epitome of musical perfection, with Buckley barely hiding his excitement. To hear Walker's finest compositions handled with such care and reverence is something that all who have the fortune to witness this ambitious performance will never forget. Of course, even after highlight after highlight, taking in 'The Seventh Seal' and 'It's Raining Today', the best comes last. As the band return to a standing ovation for the encore, the hoped-for opening to 'The Old Man's Back Again (Dedicated To The Neo-Stalinist Regime)' begins. The previously politely restrained audience lets loose dancing in the aisles.

Truly a night to remember.

Jon 'Mojo' Mills

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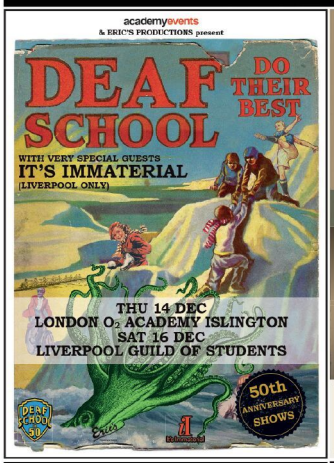
Luis Correia (Earl Slick) Guitar
Florence Sabeva (Heaven 17) Keyboards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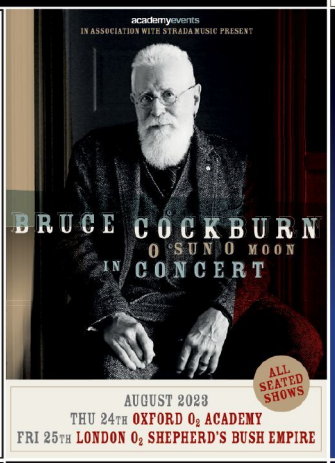
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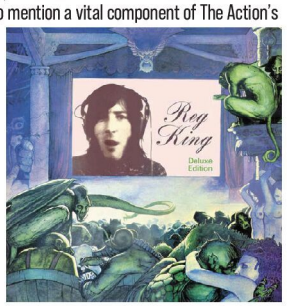
LEEDS O2 ACADEMY

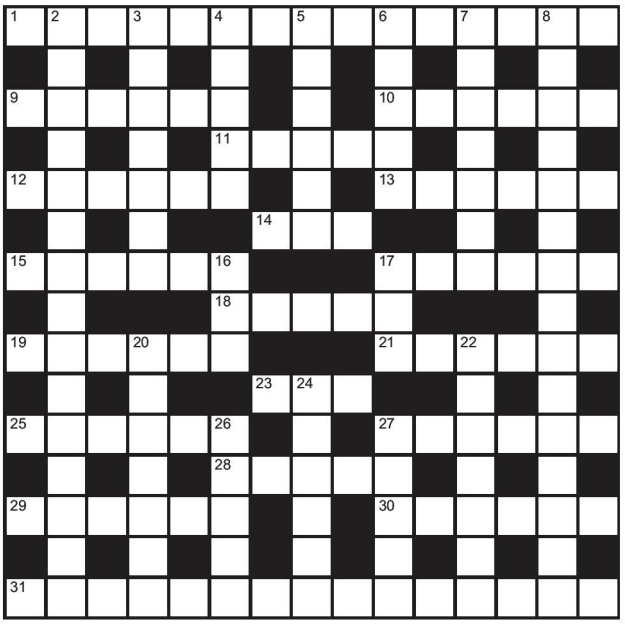
Prize Crossword

by Stuart Draper

REG KING's self-titled 1971 album may not have set the world on fire upon its release but, partly due to the singer's retrospective acclaim and appeal, has become a much-loved curio in the early '70s prog and singer-songwriter canons (not to mention a vital component of The Action's wider discography). Strawberry Records' new 3-CD edition bundles the original album, numerous alternate versions and out-takes, and a cache of pre-album demos, presenting the fullest, clearest picture of King's solo work to date. And we have a copy to give away.



To enter, simply send your completed crossword to *Shindig!* #141 Crossword, 40 Windsor Crescent, Frome, Somerset BA11 2EA or email a legible scan of it to win@shindig-magazine.com with the words "S! #141 crossword competition" in the subject line, no later than 3rd August. And don't forget to include your name and address!



Across

1 Matthew verse holds a venomously eerie variety, as Schizo Fun Addict preach on their latest (4,4,7)
9 The Electric Soft Parade join Amin on the spot, like fools (6)
10 Van began with the first man in me, George followed (6)
11 I confess The Prisoners' label were grown ups at heart (3,2)
12 Irregular investigator loses target, tails night for the Super Furries (6)
13/5 Mahler phoned unusually, a Beach Boys plea gets to number one (4,2,6)
14 Central location on the front of this very magazine (3)
15 See above or above "see" – Kevin Ayers' last harvest was halved after halfwits (6)
17 Hertz mixes with prey, drives a breezy Boulder band (6)
18 Mike on the mic and apt to confusion (5)
19 John Bassman Group rectify hit fly, add sky (6)
21 A start to start some Bobby Lee myths is unoriginal before cutting (6)
23 This 1973 Soft Machine record didn't end until gone 1983 – the answer follows immediately (3)
25 Sixties ski soundtrack from Morricone is almost a Hebrew hello (6)
27 Beaten bad ego creates wine storage at this year's Manchester Psych Fest (6)
28 Alps aren't found around pennisula on boring Kit Sebastian single (5)
29 The agency requires time to add a French composer, it's a journey (6)
30 Eat Buy Love - fashion the former for a black album from the latter (6)
31 A godly guise from Shizuka - plan has everyone worried (8,7)

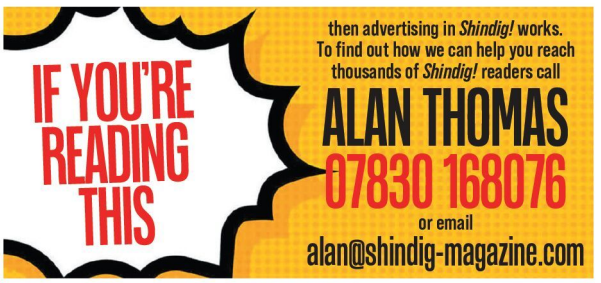
Down

2 Rotator in Fortingall Yew makes Allan Sheldon flip? (3,8,4)
3 Temples' newly built by an external Costa Rican (7)
4 Let ring out of Rolling Stone – Jimm finished the last drop of wine (5)
5 See 13 Across
6 Picasso flees ship's company carelessly, leaves half of the Sardonicus oeuvre (5)
7 Huckleberry need an agitated Les Gray band or a bodywork protector (7)
8 Mrs Peel perhaps precedes Jamaican capital, Troy Dante is sounding stalky (4,3,8)
16 Semi-crispy conclusion to Circus Maximus enquiry of a straight guy (3)
17 Sawed-off bazooka releases Cope-compiled Walker retrospective (3)
20 The Church almost instruct Stanshall or Pretty Things' Prince on a Middle Eastern city (3,4)
22 A little numeric Nilsson tune, covered by The Yardbirds, finalised with some slight Hindi answers (7)
24 Somewhat into bohemian kayaking, he walked that road again a few months back (3,3)
26 Chameleons without aches on Sweetwater's last (5)
27 Bird table lacks centre, and – as expected – Gidians end with revelations (5)

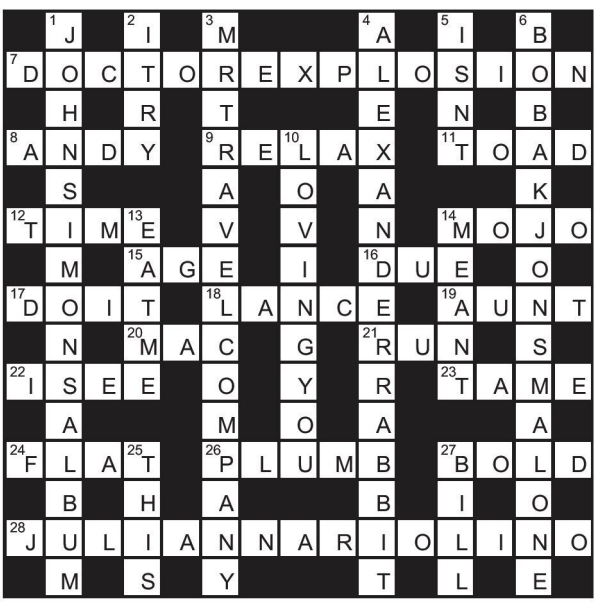
Name

Address

Phone **Email**



Issue 140 crossword solution



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New Distractions

by Dream Phases - NER-048

Emerging from the City of Angels' neo-psychedelic rock scene in 2017, Dream Phases reflects Calfornia's natural splendor and adventuresome inner spirit in its music.

The earthy-yet-exalted sounds of the Byrds, the Beach Boys and Crosby, Stills, Nash ,Young – as well as latter-dayartists like the Rain Parade, Elliott Smith and Autolux – figure into the band's family tree. Whilethis lineage is worth noting, what comes through in the band's latest work is an individual approach that translates the experiences of its members into something undeniably compelling.

First track to last, you can hear this vitality in New Distractions, Dream Phases' sophomore album.

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EXCLUSIVE RELEASES

Hold Drugs Dear

By R.J. Bloke - NER-049

Hold Drugs Dear is a dynamic solo effort from RJ Bloke, front man & songwriter for Los Angeles based alt-country, americana, roots rock quartet Patrolled By Radar.

These warm and urgent analog recordings feature an array of stellar guests including Alex Moore, Spencer Livingston (Livingmore), Eli Wulfmeier (Leroy from the North), Peter Curry (Los Straitjackets, Nick Lowe), and Davey Allen (Eric Burdon, Davey & The Midnights).

This collection of well-crafted poetic and melodic songs are sure to appeal to fans of Dylan, Ray Davies, Jeff Tweedy, Lennon & Paul McCartney and many more, truly magificent.

Vinyl LP, Cassette, CD
available through Nomad Eel Records

Dalida takes a break from the rigours of fame and fortune in the late '60s; the front and back cover – containing Verochek's portrait – of *Les Temps Des Fleurs*

Dalida

Les Temps Des Fleurs

BARCLAY, FRANCE, 1968

PHOTO: VIC NOVA [NOWAS]
PEINTURE DE VEROCHEK

CHRISTOPHER BUDD gazes upon the haunted portrait of a French superstar

Photographer Vic Nowas captured a characteristically striking image of Dalida for the front cover of the Italo-French superstar's 21st studio album in 1968, an early entry in a catalogue that would grow to include record sleeves for the great and the good of French pop music during the '70s, including Jean Ferrat and Charles Aznavour. But as eye-catching as Nowas' work is, all collectors know that sometimes you have to flip things over to find what you're looking for.

The painted portrait of Dalida on the rear cover, signed by the mononymous Verochek, became a kind of icon for the singer through the following decade, appearing in miniature on the inner label of all her LPs until at least '77. It's an image that depicts Dalida at a moment of personal despair, yet also comes to represent something of a rebirth. But who was Verochek? From her home in Paris, the artist's daughter Constance explains that her mother was a woman of many talents, and many identities.

Born in Mâcon in Burgundy, Giselle-Agnès Verochek was already artistically inclined as a child. "Rather than play with other children, she preferred to sketch nature, churches, and ancient stones," says Constance. The family moved to Paris, where they had a bookstore, then to Beulieu-sur-Mer, then back to Paris to run a guest house. The young Giselle, with her striking Bardot-esque looks, quite naturally had ambitions to be in the movies.

As Gisèle Gallois, she was Miss Île-de-France in '57, and as Constance tells it, could have been Miss France Europe the following year, but finished as runner-up. "Later Giselle oriented herself towards an arts degree," Constance continues, "and through encouragement from her parents, who viewed her as bright and extroverted, she studied theatre at The Dramatic Arts Centre on rue Blanche and she graduated a Bachelor (Licence) in Modern Letters & Comparative English at the Sorbonne University."

Alongside her academic achievements, GG's burgeoning film career saw her appearing with Jean-Paul Belmondo and later rubbing shoulders with Yul Brynner and Steve McQueen. Indeed, a number of glamorous '60s magazine covers attest to her status as a rising talent. An almost-engagement to Italian couturier and businessman Joseph Picone never happened, as the young Giselle was unwilling to up sticks to the US and renounce her career.

Starring roles were not forthcoming however, so, on the advice of her mother, Giselle decided to take singing lessons, and found herself working with Roland Berger at the school he'd set up with Olympia Hall director Bruno Coquatrix. Adopting a new name to differentiate her music and film work, as Agnès Fontaine she wrote and performed a string of singles in '63 and '64 (although Shindiggers will probably most enjoy the late entry into her canon as Agnès Berger, '69's sitar-soaked 'Filles Fleurs'). Romance blossomed and Giselle and Roland married.

Several years older than Giselle, Berger was also something of a renaissance man, having studied engineering before the war and most recently having undertaken research with *musique concrète* pioneer Pierre Schaeffer. Dalida had been Berger's student since '55. "We were poor, but rich of culture and exceptional relationships," remembers Constance. "My father was offered to work in showbusiness in the USA. But he didn't speak English and he really liked France."

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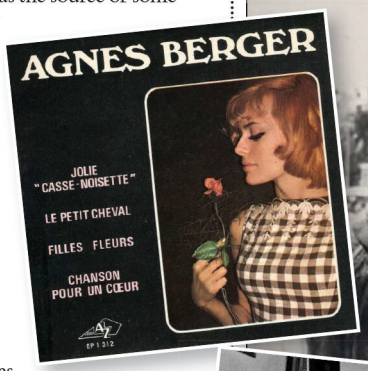
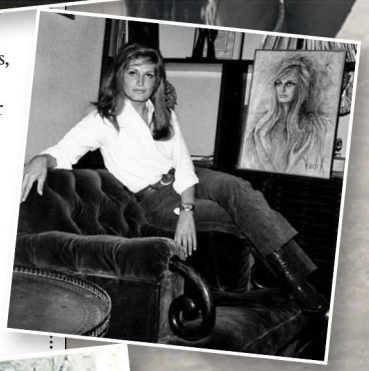




Gisèle Gallois, Miss Île-de-France, 1957; '69 EP as Agnès Berger Dalida poses at home with her portrait; invite to the '70 Olympia show

Giselle's career was the source of some conflict. "My father was possessive and wanted to keep his wife for him," Constance recalls. "My grandmother thought Roland was stealing her daughter. For his part, my father denied my mother's career as an actress, before him. This really pissed off my grandmother. He was a genius, but very critical with his students, even sometimes with Dalida".

Taking the surname of her grandfather Johan Verochek, Giselle transformed herself again, and through her theatrical connections started producing her first portraits of celebrities – a congregation that would later include President François Mitterand and Serge Gainsbourg. As Constance explains, since her father was artistic director for Barclay, he was well-connected to all the record companies. "Danyel Gérard commissioned his portrait in '66," she continues (the image graces the sleeve of his '66 EP *Je N'aime Pas Quand…*). "This made Dalida want to have her portrait too. Dalida liked art and paintings. She was the first French singer to put her image on the record cover. A portrait was something original for the record – it was a good challenge for Verochek."

Verochek begun making the painting in late '66 but was finding it strangely difficult to complete. Then in January '67, Dalida's lover, the young singer-songwriter Luigi Tenco, committed suicide. "Dalida was so upset," remembers Constance. "She tried taking her life" (the singer spent five days in a coma) and, in a supernatural twist, suggests the reason that her mother had experienced such trouble finishing the image. "The painter anticipated the drama through her gift of mediumship. She managed to finish the canvas when Dalida started to live again."

"The portrait represents her resurrection and was very important for her.... she loved it so much, that we saw it in other media, notably, the invitation for her [concert at The] Olympia on 23rd November '71.

"The painter anticipated the drama through her gift of mediumship. She managed to finish the canvas when Dalida started to live again"

All Paris came for the first performance. It was a great and historic event. [Verochek] was proud of the portrait, and to have managed to finish it in these tragic moments."

"It's not easy to talk about her style," says Constance of her mother's work, describing its "gloomy, dark aspect. [There's] always a philosophical reflection which contrasted with its beauty, its softness and its calm". After her parents' divorce, Constance points out, the canvasses are "still sad", but in the '70s, Verochek returned to painting the Burgundy landscapes of her youth, in coloured pointillism – appropriate given her childhood friendship with Claude Vialat, nephew of Monet.

Constance herself quite naturally became an artist too. "I admired my parents and my grandparents for knowing their talents, their brilliance. When I was young, my father showed me exhibitions on crafts – glassblowers, potters, weavers. He taught me photography and theatre... I found my art without trying to compete with them. I was already fascinated by flame and metal. I dreamed to become a sculptor. My mother encouraged me to learn the art of jewellery, then sculpture and brassware, because the love of art turns out to be the strongest. We've exhibited together, often in Normandy. As I spent my holidays in Burgundy, my works are inspired by nature, plants, animals. Each sculpture contains a kind of symbol and mystery, similar to a talisman".

In '74 *Les Temps Des Fleurs* became the very first of Dalida's many LPs to be reissued, initially in a new sleeve featuring an Alain Marouani portrait of the star. Modern reissues use the original artwork. Album track 'Dans la ville endormie', co-written with William Sheller, received a new seven-inch release in 2020 after appearing on the soundtrack to Cary Joji Fukunaga's *No Time To Die*.

Verochek died in 2016. Her painting of Dalida is safely in the hands of the singer's brother Orlando, in his Paris home. "I think it's a good idea to talk about painting through music," says Constance by way of a conclusion, "to look for what is hidden behind the light. To evoke a great French and international singer, in an era so musically rich, to highlight her portrait with the painter. And thus discover another star". S!

vinyl clicks

In which **MICHAEL BJÖRN** investigates worthy albums that have somehow eluded reissue, compilation or acclaim

ANDY BOWN

Gone To My Head

(Mercury, UK, 1972)

"I've made five solo albums and I'm only partially proud of three of them. *Gone To My Head* isn't one," says Andy Bown, bluntly disinheriting his first solo effort. Luckily, the beauty is in the ears of the listener, and there is a lot to enjoy here.

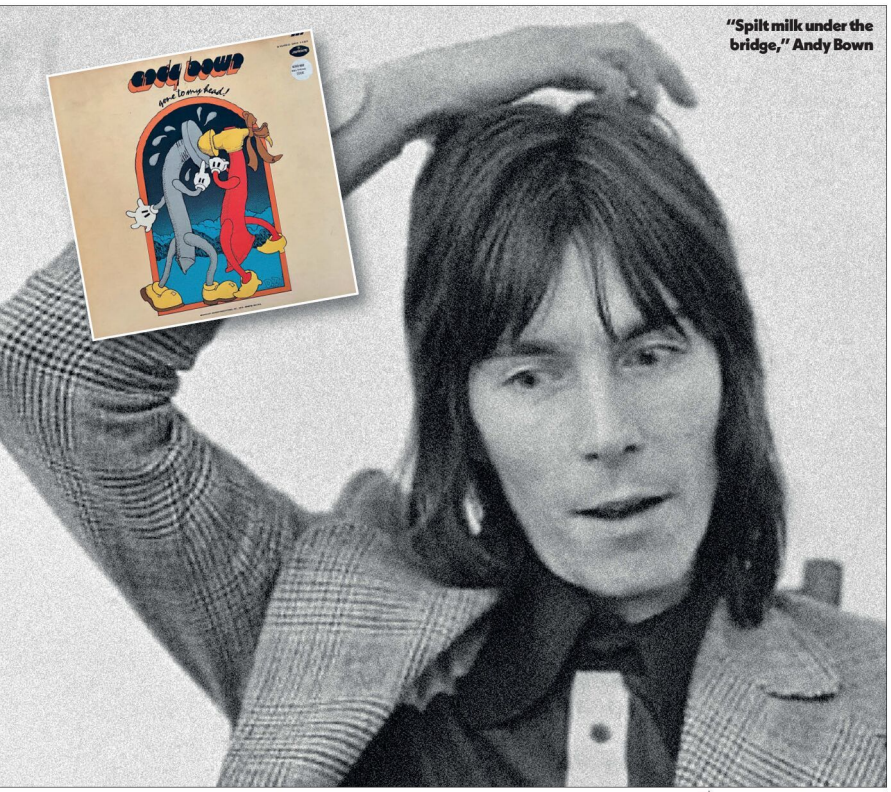
After forming progressive outfit Judas Jump with fellow ex-Herd member Henry Spinetti and releasing *Scorch* featuring Andy as main songwriter and uncredited lead singer, Bown decided to go solo. "It never crossed my mind to form another group. Too much aggravation," he explains. Former Herd manager Billy Gaff was starting GM Records and showed interest. "He thought I had talent. He had a share of Rod Stewart's management, and on the back of that he got me a deal with Mercury."

The album was recorded at IBC Studios in central London, but Andy has few recollections. "I only remember thinking, 'This doesn't sound very good, maybe it'll all be right when it's mixed…'" Swinging wildly from widescreen glam to fragile balladry and back, it sounds quite right indeed. While keeping the variety from *Scorch*, the songwriting is better and ex-Herd colleague Peter Frampton's guitar contributions are frankly great. "I think it's fair to say that the music is 'varied'", he agrees. "Too bloody varied if you ask me. The same mistake I've made over and over. Too clever."

The songs reflect Andy's rock star experiences. "I thought it was hip to crab about success in the pop business. Pretty juvenile, eh," he comments sardonically. "On behalf of the management, please accept this list of expenses: stick-a-soles, toilet rolls, taxi fares and small boys," goes a telling title track line, with the additional "Just wiggle your hips and pout your lips" about the job to be done. Not that all of that was necessarily his own experience: "Theatrical bullshit," he says dismissively today. However, he is more positive about the three tracks with lyrics by scriptwriter Trevor Preston. Original Rolling Stones drummer Tony Chapman had connected them, and they co-wrote the fabulous theme tune 'Tarot' for Preston's popular fantasy children's television show *Ace Of Wands*. "House on fire," exclaims Andy. "Many good songs resulted."

The cover features a literally striking image that the singer had found on a visit to Chicago. But Mercury was focusing on the American market, and unfortunately used a non-laminated USA printed sleeve in the UK that was maybe too rough-hewn for British buyers. "Not a lot of copies were sold anywhere, really," he concludes, while musing on the lost opportunity. "Part of me would give a lot to have that chance again, but only part," he adds. "Spilt milk under the bridge."

Andy Bown continued his career with Peter Frampton, Status Quo and in the Pink Floyd surrogate band touring *The Wall*, but his solo debut never shared such moments in the limelight.



"Spilt milk under the bridge," Andy Bown

audio heaven

Contemporary Retro

MURDO MATHEWSON surveys the latest vintage inspired hi-fi and audio gadgetry

Does a proliferation of retro designs foreshadow the death of an industry? Or is taking inspiration from the past the way forward? These deliberations were behind much of the beard-stroking at 'High End 2023'. For the uninitiated, High End sees the world's leading hi-fi makers journey to Munich to exhibit their latest gear. However, you could forgive this year's showgoers for wondering if they had snuck into Doc's DeLorean and punched "last century" into the keypad. (More about that car later.)

High End occupies a vast exhibition space, but there was little escape from today's takes on hi-fi's past. JBL demoed the L100 Classic MkII, the newest version of its iconic loudspeaker, first sold in 1970. Meanwhile, McIntosh announced its ML1 MKII speaker, a rebirth of the ML1, the company's first model and another '70 debutant. Naim exhibited the Nait 50, an update of its famed '83-launched Nait 1 amplifier. Round the corner, Musical Fidelity unveiled its new A1, reigniting its renowned '85 audio engine. And Klipsch's exhibition space included the Sevens powered loudspeaker, which takes design cues from its maker's celebrated mid-century blueprints.

So, is this the end of the road for hi-fi design? We think not. The revival models take classic – often *beloved* – designs and shape them for today's users. JBL upgrades internals and delivers an improved foam grille (the original material could crumble over time). Musical Fidelity's updated A1 still gets hot – a consequence of its Class A operation – but its casework no longer doubles as a George Foreman grille. And the Klipsch model's connectivity features wireless music streaming and HDMI ARC. Plus, many makers of retro designs also offer contemporary models (under the same or different brand names). Perhaps the hi-fi industry *can* please all of the people all of the time.

Finally, to Emmett 'Doc' Brown's motor. Production of the DeLorean Alpha5, a battery-powered evolution of '81's DMC DeLorean, should begin this year and Cambridge Audio – the '60s-founded British audio brand – is behind the car's sound system. That's the power of (retro) love.

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